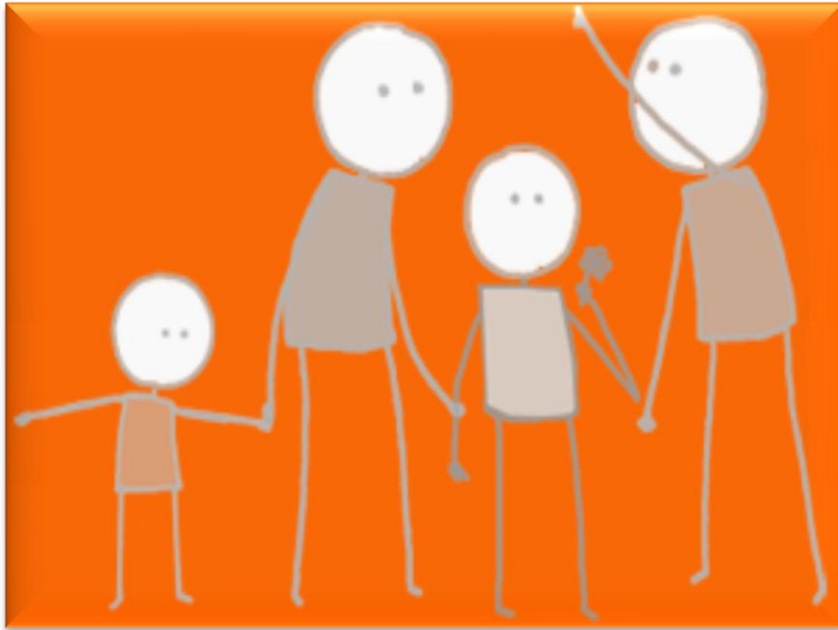


The Social Ecology of Youth Support: A Study of Social Capital Formation in a Low-Income Canadian Neighbourhood



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

Throughout much of the world, efforts to contain youth violence and other effects of youth alienation through crime control and punitive measures have rarely succeeded, largely because of their failure to redress the antecedents of youth alienation. In response, an alternative rights-based discourse centering on preventive and restorative approaches to youth alienation is now increasingly endorsed. As part of this alternative discourse, the notion of social capital – the constellation of resources and assets that are generated from sustained supportive relationships – has attracted considerable interest as a conceptual basis for strategies of youth assistance. A key assumption underlying social capital as a youth policy concept is that the benefits ensuing from opportunities for education, recreation, and meaningful work can help to reinforce the resilience and inherent abilities of young people (Hawkins, 1999; Holland, et al., 2007; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003; Ungar, ed., 2005). Nevertheless, because of the diversity of its purported uses and outcomes, and the challenges that it presents for analysis, social capital remains ambiguous and complex as a feature of youth policy.

This study, which is part of an international research project funded by the Partnership Branch of the International Development Research Centre², examines the nature, volume, and sources of social capital available to youth in one low-income neighbourhood, Britannia Woods, in the city of Ottawa. The purpose of the study is to assess the extent to which social capital formation has facilitated youth socialization and the expansion of youth capacities and opportunities. It also contributes to a comparative assessment of the social ecology of youth social capital formation in diverse urban political economies.

The study was undertaken as a collaborative enterprise involving researchers from the University of Ottawa and the staff of Britannia Woods Community House (BWCH). In view of the social ecology of youth relationships, a mixed methodological approach was adopted that consisted of participant observation, a survey of the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of neighbourhood youth social capital formation, a subsequent series of focus group interviews with neighbourhood youth, and an analysis of the municipal and provincial field of child and youth support that forms part of the larger social ecology of youth social capital formation. The report concludes by reflecting on the broader urban political economy, and its connection with both the field of child and youth support, and the formation of youth social capital in low-income communities.

¹ The design on the cover page of this report is the logo of Britannia Woods Community House.

² Other studies were conducted in Managua (Nicaragua) and San Salvador (El Salvador).

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Samantha Morrow-Flint conducted oral surveys with youth.

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Angela Smart participated as a co-interviewer in the youth focus groups & conducted the youth capital survey analysis.

Eriola Pema transcribed focus group and interview oral recordings & conducted a preliminary discourse analysis of the mandates of youth service providers.

Graduate Students (Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa)

Brad Cartier participated in initial participant observations in Britannia Woods & conducted preliminary mapping of youth social services in the Ottawa area.

David D'Intino transcribed focus group and interview oral recordings & conducted a preliminary discourse analysis of the mandates of youth service providers.

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I. YOUTH SOCIAL CAPITAL: A FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction: Youth Marginalization and Social Capital: Academic and Policy Perspectives

In the field of youth studies there is tangible evidence of the connections between the entrenched marginalization of impoverished city neighbourhoods and high levels of alienation, crime, and violence among youth living in such neighbourhoods. Urban impoverishment tends to have a corrosive effect on families and communities, leaving many young people vulnerable to an array of risks that often result in behavioural responses which flout mainstream norms and standards. Unfortunately the actions of alienated youth routinely aggravate their marginalization by fueling popular perceptions of recalcitrant youth as a grave threat to social order (McKendrick, et al., 2007; te Riele, 2006; Sokal 2003). Accordingly, throughout much of the world, conventional policies and programs designed to address “youth problems” have been informed by the discourse of containment and control, with the primary purpose being to ensure stability and the protection of society from wayward youth. Yet as ample evidence has demonstrated, interventions that are designed essentially to contain youth violence and other effects of youth alienation, particularly measures that rely on precepts of discipline and crime control, rarely have a substantial impact in diminishing behaviours considered to be disruptive and socially threatening. In large part this is due to their failure in redressing the antecedents of youth alienation (García-Méndez, 1998; Maclure & Sotelo, 2003; Spergel, 1995; Thornberry, et al., 2003).

In response to growing criticisms of policy approaches that rely on containing youth, over the last two decades an alternative rights-based discourse centering on preventive and restorative approaches to youth alienation has gained considerable ground. Spurred by the impetus of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, most governments have formally accepted the precept that all children (persons below eighteen years old) are entitled to special rights guaranteeing their care and protection.³ In addition, given the multitude of factors affecting child and youth development, ranging from household circumstances to broad economic and social conditions, there is now widespread awareness of the damaging impact of poverty on children and youth and the corresponding inadequacy of containment and crime control as bases for curbing adolescent ‘deviance’. In most countries, however, there is no magic bullet or identifiable set of policies that can significantly reduce the structural underpinnings of poverty. This presents a considerable challenge not only for the inhabitants of low-income communities, but for organizations and civic groups attempting to assist young people growing up in contexts of socio-economic adversity.

Of course youth and children often possess qualities of resilience and agency that can potentially

³ According to the Convention, signatory states are enjoined to ensure that the best interests of all children are a priority of governance (Article 18), and that maximum public resources should be allocated for children’s welfare (Articles 3 and 4).

enable them to surmount the rueful effects of poverty. Yet rarely are they able to harness these qualities on their own. Invariably they require support that will facilitate their learning and their healthy emotional, cognitive, and social development. In effect, they require *social capital* – the constellation of resources and assets that are generated from sustained supportive relationships. A concept that has attained considerable prominence in recent years, social capital has become the basis for compelling discussion and debate in the field of youth studies and in youth-oriented policy formulation. With its origins in Tocqueville’s articulation of social cohesion and voluntary group cooperation (Ferragina, 2010), and Hanifan’s 1916 treatise on the benefits of fellowship and social intercourse (cited by Koniordos, 2008), social capital is now widely embraced as a way to explain the direct connection between social relationships and long term well-being. Yet it remains an ambiguous concept, in large part because of differing definitions and the diversity of perspectives concerning its purported uses and outcomes.

As an early proponent of the empirical foundations of social capital, Pierre Bourdieu saw it as being interconnected with two other forms of capital – cultural and economic. Expanding on the Marxist conceptualization of capital as a basis for augmenting economic production and the acquisition of wealth, Bourdieu regarded social capital as constituting the information and skills necessary for reinforcing power and status (Bourdieu, 1986). Others have conceptualized social capital as a dynamic aspect of established structures such as family, community, and school that are situated in environments of socio-economic diversity (Coleman, 2000; Lin, 2001; Portes & Mooney, 2002). Generated collectively through the social relationships that are characteristic of these structures, social capital constitutes the resources and capacities that enable people to act for their own individual as well as collective benefit (Portes, 2000). Yet because it is differentially attainable in stratified or fragmented socio-economic contexts it tends to be beneficial for some individuals while being less relevant for others (Coleman, 2000; Ferragina, 2010).

A somewhat different perspective focuses on social capital as a disposition to develop and maintain social networks that are bound together by shared values and precepts of mutual trust. On the basis of this communal emphasis, social capital facilitates the attainment of collective utilitarian ends such as the enhancement of organizational effectiveness, the strengthening of civil societies, and the reinforcement of sustainable democracies (Field, 2003; Portes & Mooney, 2002). As an integral feature of mutually supportive relations in communities and nations, social capital is seen as a valuable means of countering tendencies of social alienation and disorder in modern societies (Halpern, 2005; Holland, et al., 2007; Putnam, 1993). From this communal perspective, a social environment characterized by the rule of law and the existence of legitimate political institutions is regarded as propitious for the formation of social capital (Fukuyama, 2002).

1.2 Youth Social Capital

Much of the scholarship on social capital has centered on adult relationships and the subsequent benefits that adult individuals and social groups accrue from these relationships. Since the late 1990s, however, in concert with heightened awareness of the social ecology of youth development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), growing attention has focused on social capital formation among youth (Helve & Bynner, eds., 2007). Various studies have demonstrated how the

identities of young people and their capacities for resilience and choice frequently stem from their relationships with family members, peers, neighbours, teachers and mentors (Bassani, 2007; Gillies & Lucey, 2006; Seaman & Seating, 2004; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). Youth socialization has likewise been shown to be strongly affected by institutions such as schools and recreation centres that are designed to guide as well as control their development (Holland, et al., 2007; Sokal, 2003; Kahne, et al., 2001). Interest in the ways young people are thus able to capitalize on these relationships and influences has inevitably led scholars to regard social capital formation as a central feature of youth development, especially in contexts of rapid urbanization and precipitous socio-economic and cultural change.

The formulation of youth social capital is, of course, a derivative of relationships that are shaped and delineated by prevailing socio-economic circumstances. Consequently, as with adults, social capital for young people is neither equally available nor created in similar ways. In communities that are variously affected by poverty, high unemployment, family fragmentation, and entrenched forms of discrimination and disparity, opportunities for youth social capital formation are often very limited (Bergsgaard, M., & Sutherland, 2003). In such circumstances, as a form of compensation, many young people may strive to assert their identity and autonomy through choices and actions that may put them at risk because they are generally regarded as antithetical or resistant to established norms and structures (Seaman & Sweeting, 2004). This can then foster a cyclical dynamic – with minimal access to social capital, youth may become easily susceptible to factors of risk that exacerbate social fragmentation and further constrain the capacity of local communities to extend support for young people (Holland, et al., 2007). When these conditions prevail, individuals and groups who are intent on assisting young people (e.g., parents, teachers, and community leaders) often find themselves lacking the necessary resources to counter the effects of poverty and alienation. This, then, leads to a key question: how to generate youth social capital in circumstances that pose multiple risks for healthy youth development?

1.3 Social Capital as a Policy and Program Precept

This heightened interest in youth social capital formation, coupled with acknowledgment of the difficulties low-income communities frequently have in generating the resources necessary to support children and adolescents, has had a burgeoning effect on the discourse of youth-oriented social policies and programs, particularly in Northern industrial countries. In contrast to the conventional crime control approach to youth delinquency and violence, which is fundamentally a reactive response to the unsettling consequences of neighbourhood poverty and youth alienation, the notion of social capital now commonly serves as a conceptual rationale for many policies and community development programs designed to assist young people. A key assumption underlying the affirmation of social capital as a policy concept is that increased youth opportunities for education, recreation, and meaningful work can enhance individual skills and expand supportive relationships which help to reinforce the resilience and inherent abilities of young people (Hawkins, 1999; Holland, et al., 2007; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003; Ungar, ed., 2005). Social capital, in other words, is increasingly seen as both *a means and an outcome* of policies and services directed specifically for children and youth.

This enlistment of social capital as a cornerstone of policy and program discourse is not, however, without contention. As some critics have suggested, social capital has become an

integral feature of a liberal agenda that relies largely on civil society organizations (CSOs) to ensure social stability by supporting young people and diminishing the prospects of youth rebellion and delinquency. Accordingly, this has fostered a perspective of social capital formation as a remedy or panacea for youth problems (Earls & Carlson, 2001) and, by extension, a discrete process that discounts the inequities of market forces and established power arrangements. Policy approaches that centre primarily on enhancing local support mechanisms for youth should thus be criticized for downplaying or discounting broader contextual factors underlying youth marginalization. In the event that social capital is enlisted as a policy precept, it should be regarded as embedded in the social ecology of communities and hence circumscribed by the corresponding economic, political, and ideological circumstances that prevail.

1.4 Analyzing Social Capital: Methodological Challenges

These critical considerations of social capital as a feature of policies and programs mirror similar cautionary views concerning social capital as an analytical concept and the methods by which it can be measured and assessed. As Koniordos (2008) has observed, because “social capital now appears to be everywhere” (p. 327), there is often confusion as to precisely where it is manifested and what its indicators are. A critical challenge, therefore, is to clarify both what it *is*, and what it is *not*. For example, it is important to avoid confusing social capital (i.e., relationships that generate specific beneficial results) with social relations themselves. The creation of social capital requires accumulated relationships that *generate individual and/or collective benefits*. This conceptual distinction – between the social relations and the ability to benefit from them – is essential to ensure the specificity of social capital and its heuristic power (Bassani, 2007). A further imperative is to recognize that because it embodies both qualitative and quantitative properties that imbue it with empirical complexity, there is no fixed or established way to measure or assess social capital (Koniordos, 2008). It is qualitative in terms of the *nature of relationships* that facilitate individual and group access to resources and opportunities within their communities and beyond. Yet it is also quantitative in terms of *the amount and strength of social benefits* that are available through such relationship (Catts, 2007). As a focus of analysis, therefore, social capital is compelling and challenging. Depending on the parameters of inquiry, research on social capital can range from micro-level ethnographies to larger scale quantitative sampling, with options for mixed methodological approaches. This particular study of youth social capital formation in a Canadian urban context has been conducted as a mixed method inquiry.

1.5 The Study

This study is one of three research projects examining the dynamics of youth social capital formation in low-income urban neighbourhoods⁴. Focussing on the social housing community of Britannia Woods in the city of Ottawa, the study examines the nature, the volume, and the sources of social capital available to youth in the neighbourhood, and the extent to which social

⁴ Funded by the Partnership Branch of IDRC, the study on youth social capital consists of research projects in Ottawa, San Salvador (El Salvador) and Managua (Nicaragua).

capital formation has facilitated the diminishment of risks and the simultaneous expansion of youth capacities and opportunities. In addition, a key objective of the research has been to shed light on the ways that numerous organizations and urban assistance programs for children and adolescents contribute to youth social capital formation.

Conceptually, the study makes a distinction between social resources – relationships of support for young people that are manifested across different dimensions of the social ecology of youth experience – and the mobilization of these relationships that is synonymous with social capital. To facilitate analysis, two dimensions of social resources were identified : *structural resources* which consist of the entities to which young people are connected (e.g., family, peer associations, and schooling), and *functional resources* which allude to the nature and quality of these relationships (e.g., love, friendship, trust, reciprocity, and cooperation). When these two dimensions coalesce positively and are used for specific constructive ends, social capital is formulated. In some situations where there are resource “deficiencies” (e.g., families living in overcrowded conditions and experiencing tensions and disconnectedness), there may be limited prospects for social capital formation. On the other hand, where some resources are deficient and others are “efficient” (e.g., families living in poor housing but whose members nonetheless maintain supportive relationships), social capital may emerge from a counter-balancing dynamic. As this study reveals, this distinction between structural and functional resources in relation to the social ecology of youth living in one low-income neighbourhood has been a critical factor for many youth living in Britannia Woods.

The project was undertaken as a collaborative enterprise involving two researchers from the University of Ottawa and the staff of Britannia Woods Community House (BWCH)⁵. In view of the social ecology of youth relationships, we adopted a sequential mixed method approach to data collection and analysis that entailed the following stages of fieldwork.

Baseline Community Study

At the outset of the research project, in order to gain familiarity with Britannia Woods and the social resources available to children and adolescents within the community, the University of Ottawa researchers conducted a baseline study of the neighbourhood that consisted of document collection, participant observations, and informal interviews with young people, parents, and BWCH personnel. In so doing, we sought to ascertain indicators of social capital while simultaneously establishing good relationships with neighbourhood tenants and youth. This baseline analysis enabled us to attain a clear overview of the characteristic social relationships among young people and the institutions to which they were connected.

⁵ BWCH is one of 14 community houses funded partly by the City of Ottawa to provide child and family assistance in low-income neighbourhoods in the greater Ottawa area. Its mandate and services will be described in Part II of this report.

Youth Social Capital Formation Survey

Drawing upon the results of the baseline community study the research team developed a survey instrument designed to elicit information on the structural and functional aspects of the social resources available to youth in Britannia Woods, and how – and to what extent – these translated into different forms of social capital. The survey was administered as an oral questionnaire to 100 young people (aged 12 – 20) living in the neighbourhood. In view of the partnership with BWCH, the study was accepted as a *bona fide* community house project. Accordingly, in keeping with the principle of engaging young people as participants in community house activities, four neighbourhood adolescents were hired to conduct the one-on-one survey interviews. Training involved several preliminary interviews with peer volunteers, who themselves then contributed to the briefing sessions with the selected four adolescent interviewers. Through multivariate analysis, the survey enabled the research team to map out the sources of community social capital and its effect on the circumstances and aspirations of youth in Britannia Woods.

Focus Group Interviews

While the youth social capital formation survey enabled us to establish correlations between social relationships and indicators of social capital, the quantitative data did not allow for an examination of causality in any depth. Consequently, in order to discern more directional insights into these connections, the research team hosted a series of focus group interviews with different age sets of young people, all of whom had participated as respondents in the earlier survey. Preliminary analysis of the survey data served as a basis for the questions that were used to facilitate the group discussions. The focus groups were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants, and each was led by two interviewers in rotation – a University of Ottawa researcher and one of the four research assistants who had participated earlier as survey interviewers. The involvement of these young people as research assistants was mutually beneficial for it enabled them to gain research experience and it added significantly to the richness of the de-briefing discussions after each focus group session, and hence to the overall data analysis.

Two additional focus groups were conducted with parents. These were led by two researchers, but in this case each pair consisted of one University of Ottawa and a BWCH permanent staff member. Both parent focus groups were likewise audio-taped with the permission of the participants.

The Field of Youth Social Services as a Catalyst of Youth Social Capital: Discourse Analysis

While the study focused on youth social capital formation in one small Ottawa neighbourhood, it was clear from the outset that the social resources available to most young people in Britannia Woods, and in all other communities in Ottawa, emanate from a variety of informal and institutional sources that extend beyond the proximity of their own immediate neighbourhoods (e.g., schools, recreational centres, etc.). Drawing upon Bourdieu's notion of *fields of influence* in relation to social capital formation (Grenfell, 2009), we therefore undertook an assessment of

the mandates and program activities of several prominent institutions offering direct or indirect assistance for youth in the Ottawa region. This was complemented by several semi-structured interviews with senior youth organization staff members. Although this was only a small sample of the organizations and people involved in providing services for families and youth in Ottawa, we were nonetheless able to discern a pattern of policy and program discourse that has helped to expand and sustain an influential field of youth promotion and support in the city. This field of child and youth support forms a significant part of the broader social ecology of youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods.

1.6 Structure of the Report

Following this introductory chapter, in Part II we present a very brief overview of some key features of the city of Ottawa, which is widely regarded as an affluent city. Nonetheless, a sizeable proportion of its population, including children and adolescents, live in low-income social housing neighbourhoods and must contend with problems that are often associated with poverty. We then present one such neighbourhood, Britannia Woods and its most prominent local social service, Britannia Woods Community House which participated as a partner institution in this study. In Part III we present the results of a quantitative survey conducted with 100 youth living in Britannia Woods. The purpose of the survey was to assess the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of youth social capital from the perspectives of the youth themselves. This is followed by a summary in Part IV of a series of focus group interviews with some of the same youth who participated in the survey, largely as a way to further assess aspects of social capital formation that were articulated in the survey.

As this study progressed, it became clear that youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods is very much a part of a broader social ecology that is substantially influenced by a field of child and youth support involving a multitude of people, associations, and organizations throughout the city of Ottawa. In Part V, therefore, we present an analysis of the discourse of this field in order to highlight the extent to which youth social capital formation is an extension of this field of endeavour. We conclude this report by reflecting in Part VI on the broader urban political economy, and its connection with both the field of child and youth support, and the formation of youth social capital in the low-income community of Britannia Woods.

II. BRITANNIA WOODS: A LOW-INCOME NEIGHBOURHOOD IN AN AFFLUENT CITY

2.1 Overview of Ottawa: An Image of Affluence and Good Governance

Ottawa is the national capital of Canada. With a metropolitan population of over 1.2 million (Statistics Canada, 2011), more than 20 percent of its population is foreign-born. Its median age is 36.7 years, and the proportion of children under 15 years exceeds the Canadian urban average. It is an affluent city. In 2006 it had the third highest income of all major cities in Canada and an unemployment rate of 5.1%, below the national average of 6.0% (Ibid). According to Mercer's Quality of Living Survey (2010) it has the second highest quality of living of any large city in the Western Hemisphere. It is also one of the most educated cities in Canada, with over half its adult population having a college or university degree. The main employers in Ottawa are the federal civil service and the high technology industry. Local government is presided by an elected 24-member City Council and is responsible for administering all municipal services, including police, public transit, social housing, sanitation, and parks.

2.2 Poverty and Social Housing in Ottawa

Despite these singular benefits, a substantial proportion of Ottawa's population lives in circumstances of poverty and near-poverty. According to the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPCO, 2010), which relies on Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) threshold as the indicator of low income⁶, figures for 2005 indicate that more than 121,000 people in Ottawa (15.2% of the total population) were living in poverty (SPCO, 2010, p. 4). In terms of the distribution and depth of poverty, the SPCO reported that 31% of low-income families had incomes at least 50% below LICO, and that 40% of lone-parent families with children under 18 lived in poverty (Ibid.). In addition, of all low-income families in Ottawa, 35% were female-led single parent families, and 25% of single-mother families lived below the poverty line (Ibid.).

While Ottawa's unemployment rate of 5.1% is relatively low, many existing jobs in the city consist of minimum wage occupations that are often part-time or seasonal. As the SPCO (2010) states, "having a job is not a guarantee of rising out of poverty" (Ibid.). In addition, of those who are unemployed, many simply do not qualify for Ontario employment benefits. Women in care-giving years have a higher degree of economic marginalization than men and are over-represented in unemployment and in low-wage and part-time jobs. Immigrants likewise figure proportionately more than Canadian-born citizens in the ranks of Ottawa's poor. As estimated by the SPCO, recent immigrants were twice as likely as long-standing residents to be

⁶ The LICO is widely recognized as the most commonly used indicator of low income. Families and households whose incomes are below LICO thresholds are estimated to spend 55% of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing, which is more than 20 per cent than would the average Canadian household.

unemployed and more than half the city's visible minority residents were living in "high-poverty neighbourhoods" (Ibid.).⁷

A large proportion of low-income families in Ottawa live in social housing complexes that are scattered across the city.⁸ A government body, Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC)⁹, is responsible for managing approximately 70% of the city's social housing – an estimated 15,000 units in which some 32,000 people reside (many of them immigrants and children) (Interview with OCH representative). Life in social housing for many families is often difficult. Congested domestic accommodations, lack of steady employment, mental health issues, cultural and linguistic alienation from the mainstream (especially among recent immigrants and refugees), alcohol and drug abuse, and the proximity of sporadic violence and crime are all common sources of anxiety in social housing neighbourhood (Interviews from several youth service providers).

2.3 Children in Low-Income Ottawa Neighbourhoods

In 2005, an estimated 33,000 children and youth under the age of 18 in Ottawa (18.7% of this age bracket) were living in poverty, many of them in single parent households and often relying on the Ottawa Food Bank for supplemental meals (SPCO, 2010, p. 6). On average children living in low-income neighbourhoods are at greater risk of dropping out of high school than are their peers living in more affluent circumstances. Since completion of high school is a critical benchmark for subsequent integration in the social economy of Canada, failure to complete high school tends to have negative repercussions for the social and psychological development of young people. Because of low family incomes, they are likewise generally less able to participate in organized sports or recreational activities, or to attend summer camps. Having few opportunities open to them, youth from low-income neighbourhoods are prone to pressures from older youth gang members, and from other.

2.4 Britannia Woods: Context for the Case Study

The community of Britannia Woods, situated in the west-end of the City of Ottawa, is a social housing neighbourhood managed by the Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC). Adjacent to a primary school, a children's playground, and an open green space, Britannia Woods is one of OCHC's largest developments, consisting of 178 townhouses, each with three-to-four bedrooms, and small high-fenced yards. The community is multi-ethnic, with more than half the households consisting of recently arrived immigrant families, many of them headed by

⁷ In contrast to the 15.2% of the general population living in poverty in 2005, 22.7% of immigrants and 43.4% of recent immigrants (i.e., those who had arrive between 2001 and 2006) were classified as below the poverty line (SPCO, 2010).

⁸ There is a persistent shortage of quality and affordable housing. According to the SPCO (2010), in 2008 9,692 families with children were on the waiting list for affordable social housing.

⁹ Although the City of Ottawa is its sole shareholder, the OCH operates autonomously. Its 12-member Board of Directors consists of the Mayor as Ex-Officio, four city councilors, six community representatives and a tenant Board member.

single parents. Although numerous languages are spoken in the neighbourhood, the majority of residents speak English as a second language, while a smaller number communicate in French. Almost all its approximately 800 inhabitants are living below the average income level and many are living below the poverty line. Relatively few of the adult residents have full-time employment, and the majority therefore rely on some form of social assistance. Children and youth are prominent in the community; more than 60% of the neighbourhood populace is under the age of 20.



Because of its status as a low-income social housing project, Britannia Woods has long had a mixed reputation. By day it is a visibly peaceful neighbourhood. During daylight hours immediately after school and on weekends children and young teens play and cycle throughout the neighbourhood, and often congregate near the community house, even in the cold winter months. At night, however, the dark recesses of the wooded pathways and parking lots of the neighbourhood are sites of frequent drug trafficking. While much of the drug trade appears to involve outsiders, there is evidence that some neighbourhood residents are also consumers, if not traffickers, of illicit drugs. Although outbreaks of violence are relatively rare, on a few occasions Britannia Woods has been the scene of stabbings and gunshots. These incidents have attracted media attention and fostered popular perceptions of the community as a flashpoint for crime and violence.

In an effort to curb violence in neighbourhoods such as Britannia Woods, in 2007 the Ottawa Police established the DART (Direct Action Response Team) Unit which periodically conducts high visibility/zero tolerance campaigns that target street gang members and criminals believed to be misusing firearms and intimidating some residents. In addition, over the past two years the OCHC has undertaken a \$6.8 million program of neighbourhood renovation, which has included the installation of more public lighting. While these actions have helped to reduce violations such as vandalism and graffiti, drug dealing continues to be a problem. As a result, parents often express their concerns about the vulnerability of children and young teens to the predations of drugs and violent crime. Yet paradoxically, despite these worries, most residents, and certainly an overwhelming proportion of young people, are generally content to be living in Britannia Woods. To a large extent, much of this satisfaction is due to the activities of the community house.

2.5 Britannia Woods Community House

Britannia Woods Community House (BWCH) occupies one of three townhouse units adjacent to other townhouse complexes. It is backed onto an open space of trees and pathways. First established in 1978 by the OCHO, it is one of fourteen community houses that operate in low-income neighbourhoods in the greater Ottawa area. Similar to the other community houses, its principle mandate has been to enhance the quality of life for fixed or low income households by offering a range of social, educational, and recreational services. Operating on weekdays from early morning till 9:00 p.m., its programs are eclectic and target all age groups. Family services include a weekly food bank and an emergency food pantry for families lacking adequate meals, a community kitchen and clothing cupboard, computer and internet access, and information and referral services. Programs for adults include employment support, sewing and ESL classes, healthy lifestyle classes, parent education workshops, and drop-in discussion groups. A tenants' association regularly holds meetings in the community house and coordinates discussion of issues and the organization of community activities such as food drives, homework clubs, and neighbourhood barbecues with community house staff.



Most BWCH programs, however, target children and youth. In 2011, for example, of the almost 60,000 contacts with community members during the year, 80% of these were with children and youth under the age of 18 years (BWCH, 2012). Activities for young children consist of playgroups, a pre-school and school readiness program, a toy lending library, and a baby cupboard. For older children and teens, activities include after-school homework assistance that includes a healthy snack program, a lunch club that offers healthy bagged lunches to take to school¹⁰, access to a computer room with internet access, a variety of recreational, sports, and arts activities, summer camps, and “youth mentor program” in which community youth assist in the delivery of activities for children aged 6 – 12 years. Each year several neighbourhood youth are hired to work as part-time community house staff, and a volunteer youth council is invited to contribute to the planning of community house activities. In all of these activities, the overriding purpose is to provide a safe and nurturing place for children and adolescents to play, socialize, learn, and assume responsibility as young community leaders.



¹⁰ BWCH'S 2011 Annual Report indicated that “15,873 healthy bagged lunches were provided to children on their way to school. . . The lunches go into 25 different elementary and high schools in the Ottawa area” (p. 2).

With a small annual budget allocated from the City of Ottawa, BWCH relies heavily on grants from a variety of public and non-profit sources. The only full-time position is that of the Executive Director whose salary is paid by the OCHC. The current Director, Beth Gibeault, who has held this position for over a decade, is responsible for all program development and implementation, and for ongoing fund-raising, networking, and partnership development. In addition to Beth, two young social workers are paid from a City of Ottawa grant to work on a contract basis with young children and with teens respectively. The only other permanent staff member is Christine Verhulp, the program coordinator, who is a retired businesswoman and works on a volunteer basis. The remaining staff members are part-time Britannia Woods youth volunteers who frequently receive high school credits for what is considered to be community service, and some parent volunteers who occasionally assist in planning and developing various activities or outings.

Like most youth service organizations throughout the city, in order to complement its limited operating budget, BWCH has partner relations with a number of other community organizations, including the YMCA-YWCA (which has helped access funding for the BWCH through the United Way), the Ottawa Food Bank, Pinecrest -Queensway Health and Community Services, Ottawa Police/Youth Centre, and the Boys and Girls Club. A Board of Directors, which serves as an oversight body and meets on a semi-annual basis, is composed of a former Ottawa city councilor, a former Ottawa deputy police chief, and several adult and youth community residents.



In January 2006, the Britannia Woods Youth Committee was successful at receiving a United Way Youth Action Grant for multicultural drumming lessons. This eventually led to the formation of Royal Ritchie Drummers, all of whom are

youth residents of Britannia Woods. The group has since gained renown and performs regularly at events and festivals in Ottawa.

As noted at the outset of this report, Britannia Woods Community House has been an institutional partner in this research project. As such, it has administered a portion of the project budget and has been instrumental in collaborating on all fieldwork activities – the youth social capital formation survey, the youth focus group interviews, and several of the youth service provider interviews. BWCH staff and several youth have likewise contributed to analysis of the data, notably from the survey and focus groups interviews. As will become evident in the following sections of this report, the community house has been a singular force in fostering social capital among the young people of Britannia Woods.



III. BRITANNIA WOODS YOUTH SOCIAL CAPITAL SURVEY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the youth social capital survey that was conducted with 100 youth between February-April 2010 in Britannia Woods. It consisted of a questionnaire (Appendix 1) administered orally by four Britannia Woods youth who were hired as research assistants. Each respondent met on a one-to-one basis in a designated room in the community house with a research assistant who wrote the respondent's answers on the questionnaire sheets.¹¹ The questionnaires were then numbered and stored in the BWCH director's office until they were retrieved for coding and analysis by the University of Ottawa researchers.

The chapter is organized into seven sections. The first examines the demographic profile of the participants who took part in the study. Subsequent sections present youth perspectives on their relationships with individuals and various organizations that they are directly or indirectly affiliated with. Lastly, we consider the youths' outlook on life and their aspirations.

3.2 Demographic Profile of the Participants

Exactly 100 youth participated as respondents in the survey; 46 female and 54 male participants. Although they volunteered to participate by responding to a notice of invitation posted on the community house bulletin board, reinforced by numerous oral communications by BWCH staff, these participants were representative of the youth living in the neighbourhood. Their ages ranged from 12 – 20 years at the time the survey was conducted, with the average age being 15.62 years (Figure 1).

The youth who participated in the study consisted of a variety of nationalities of origin. Only 14% of the participants identified themselves as being of Canadian origin. The highest reported nationalities were African nationalities at 63%. The remaining 23% of participants reported nationalities of Middle Eastern, Asian, Caribbean, South American, European, or Aboriginal descent (Figure 2).

¹¹ Some of the results reported here are presented in the form of percentages. All percentages are calculated out of the number of responses received for each question. This number is often not 100 (the number of participants) as in most situations some youth chose not to respond to certain questions. Many of the questions from the survey were context specific and did not relate to all of the youth. Consequently less than 100 responses were expected. When reading and interpreting the percentages the reader should be aware of the sample size of responses related each specific question.

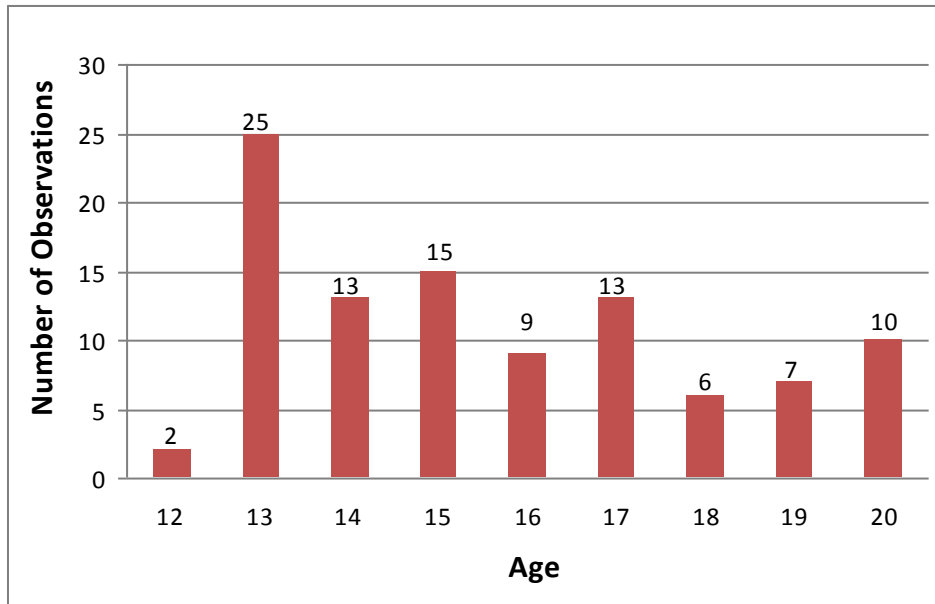


Figure 1: Age distribution of the surveyed group

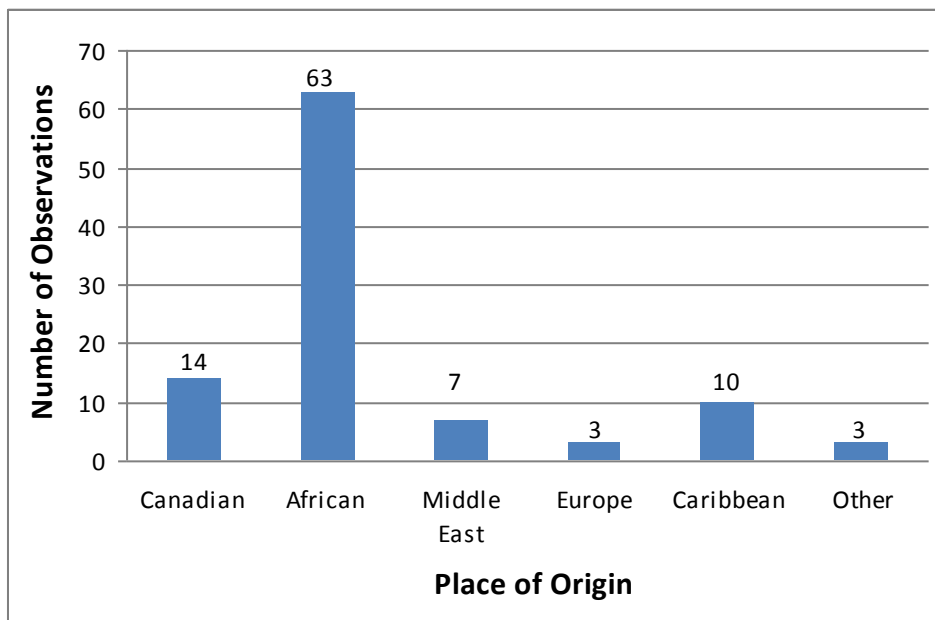


Figure 2: Nationality Distribution

The youth also reported speaking a variety of languages which corresponded with their reported nationalities. All of the youth spoke either English or French. In addition, 22% spoke Somali, 8% spoke Arabic, and the remaining 34% spoke a range of different languages, of which 23% were African (Figure 3).

All of the youth were living in Britannia Woods at the time of the survey. The average reported duration living in the neighbourhood was 4.4 years, with 66 participants having lived in Britannia Woods for at least 4 years or longer. Only 10 participants reported having lived in the community for less than 2 years (Figure 4).

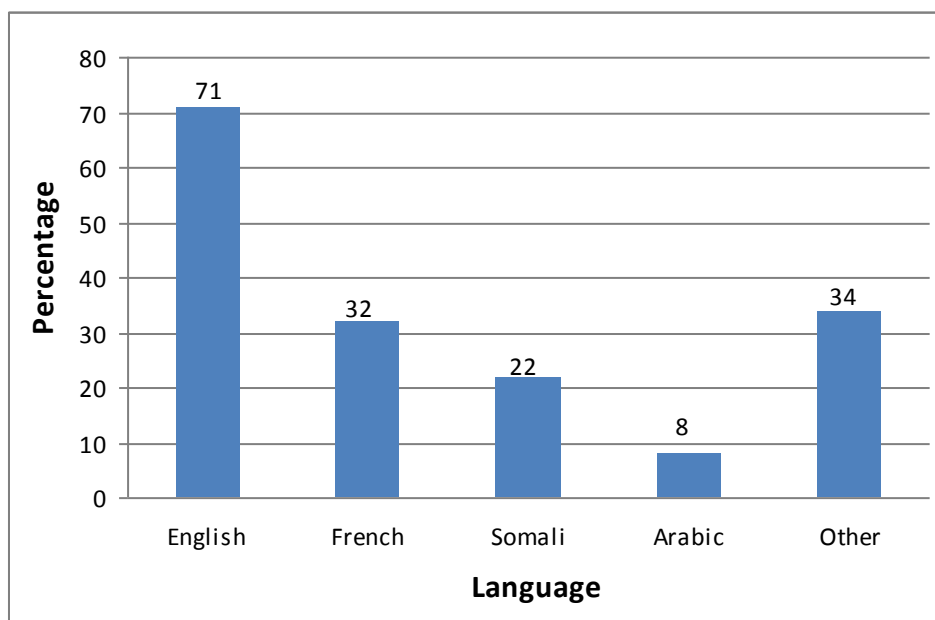


Figure 3: Languages Spoken

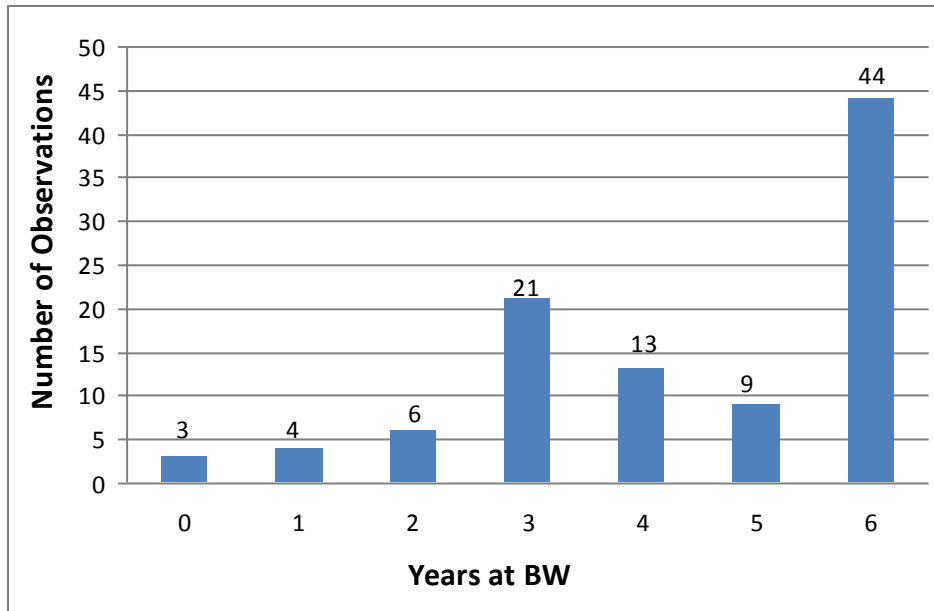


Figure 4: Years living in Britannia Woods

When questioned about where they lived prior to coming to Britannia Woods, 60 participants reported having lived elsewhere in Ottawa, three reported having lived in Gatineau (Province of Quebec), Ottawa’s “twin” city across the Ottawa River, and 13 said they had come to Britannia Woods from other areas of Canada. 18 of the participants reported having re-located to Britannia Woods from different countries (Figure 5).

A relatively high number of participants (46) reported having lived in a family shelter at least one time prior to living in Britannia Woods. As well, 25 participants reported having lived for a period of time in households headed by adults other than their immediate parents, e.g., aunts, uncles, or grandparents (Figure 6). Altogether, 71 of the participants had at one time or another lived in circumstances outside a nuclear family home.

Such peripatetic lives, often in unique ethnic, linguistic, and cultural circumstances, with most families living just above or under the poverty line, would not appear to be auspicious antecedents for the establishment of a sense of community in a neighbourhood as diverse as Britannia Woods. Yet as we will see later on, many of the young people expressed a strong attachment to the neighbourhood, and were content to have a sense of permanence in social housing and happy with the diverse backgrounds of its residents.

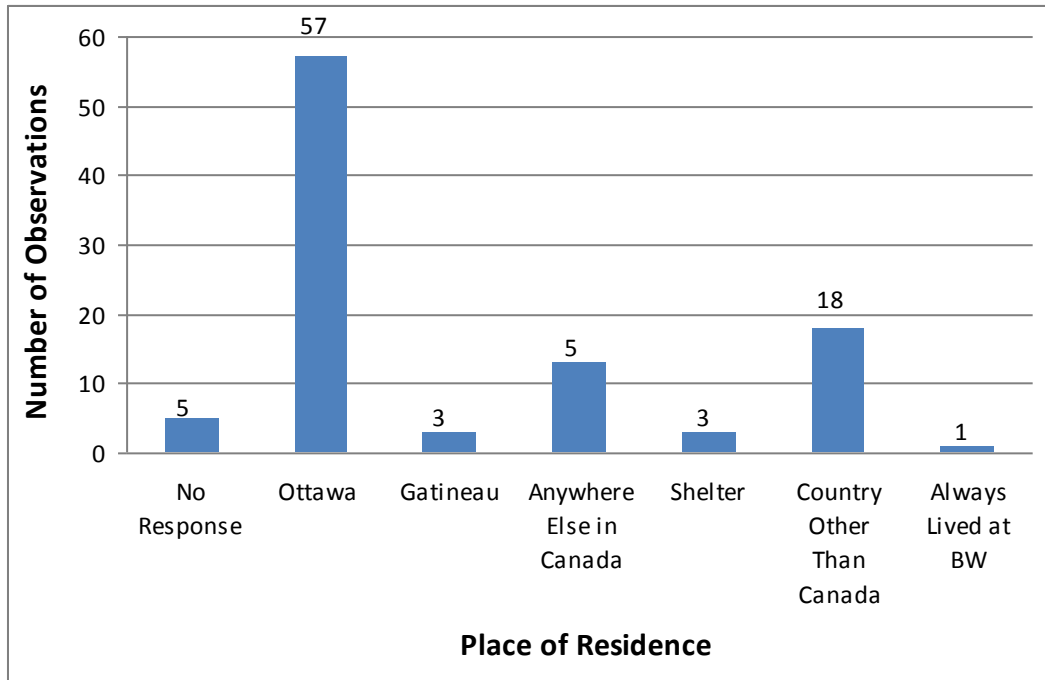


Figure 5: Residence before Britannia Woods

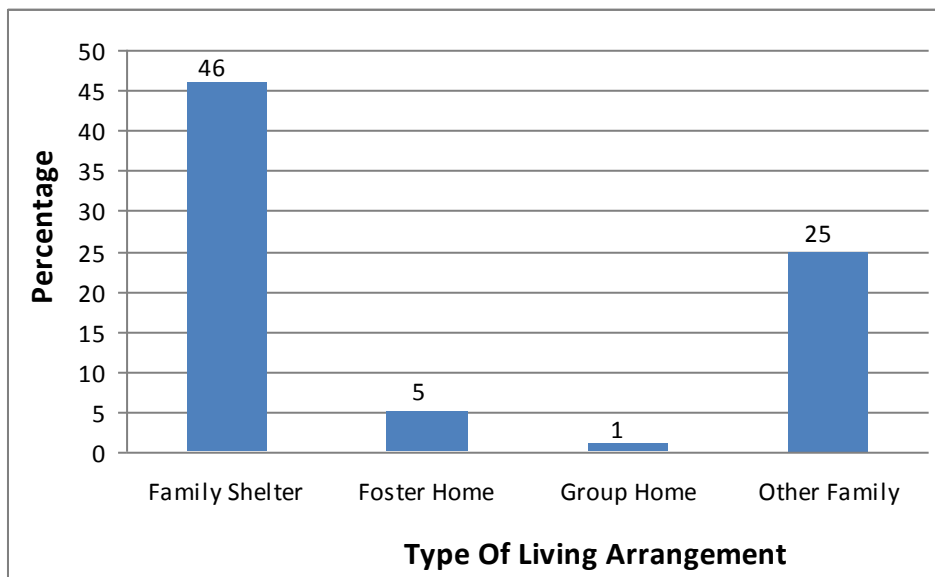


Figure 6: Other Living Arrangements

The youth respondents also reported currently living in a variety of different home situations in Britannia Woods. 42 reported living at home with mother and father, 48 reported living only with mothers, three reported living only with father, and seven participants reported living with neither mother or father. Of these later seven, six reported living with aunts and/or uncles, and one reported living with grandmother. Overall, 55 of the participants were living at home with only one adult (Figure 7).

The survey also showed an average of 4.52 children/youth under the age of 18 living in each household. 100% of participants reported having at least one sibling or one other child/youth living in the same home. 10 participants reported having family members other than parents and siblings living in the home, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, or cousins.

In view of these family situations, characterized by low income and with less than half the households having two natural parents, it would be natural to assume that children and youth in Britannia Woods would be prone to at-risk behaviour such as truancy and petty crime or worse. Yet as observations, survey results, and focus group interviews confirmed, the overwhelming number of youth in this neighbourhood appeared to be well adjusted, attending and generally succeeding in school, and with clear-sighted goals that can only be described as mainstream and middle-class.

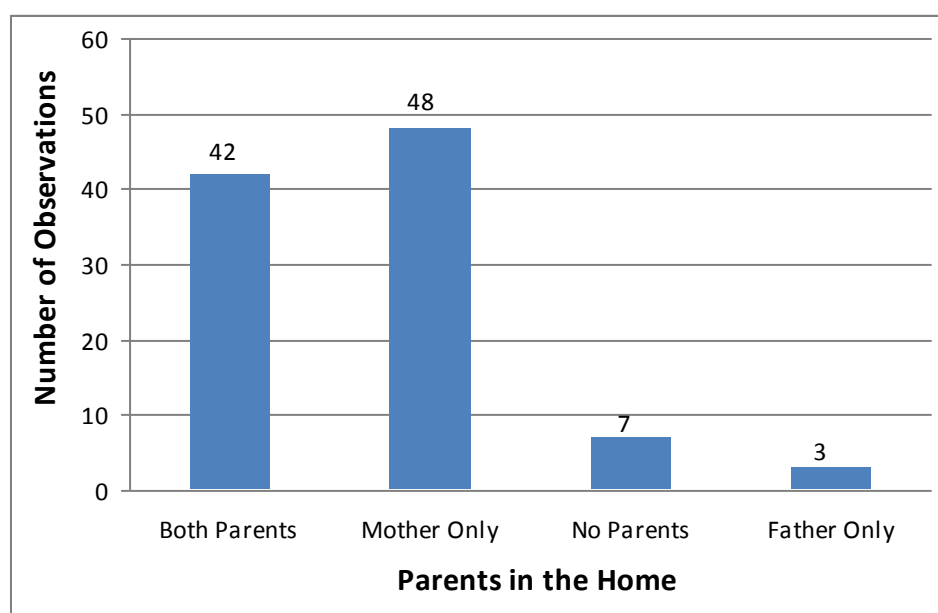


Figure 7: Parents in the Home

With regard to employment of adults in the household, 48 participants reported living with at least 1 adult who stays at home (31 mothers, 11 fathers, and six other adults), 25 participants reported living with at least 1 adult who is in school (19 mothers, three fathers, and three other adults), 35 participants reported having at least one adult who had a regular paid day job (17 mothers, 16 fathers, and two other adults) and 46 participants reported living with at least one adult who was employed on shift work (23 mothers, 14 fathers, and 9 other adults) (Figure 8).

These results confirm the low-income status of the majority of residents in Britannia Woods, and the challenges that many face in accessing the labour market.

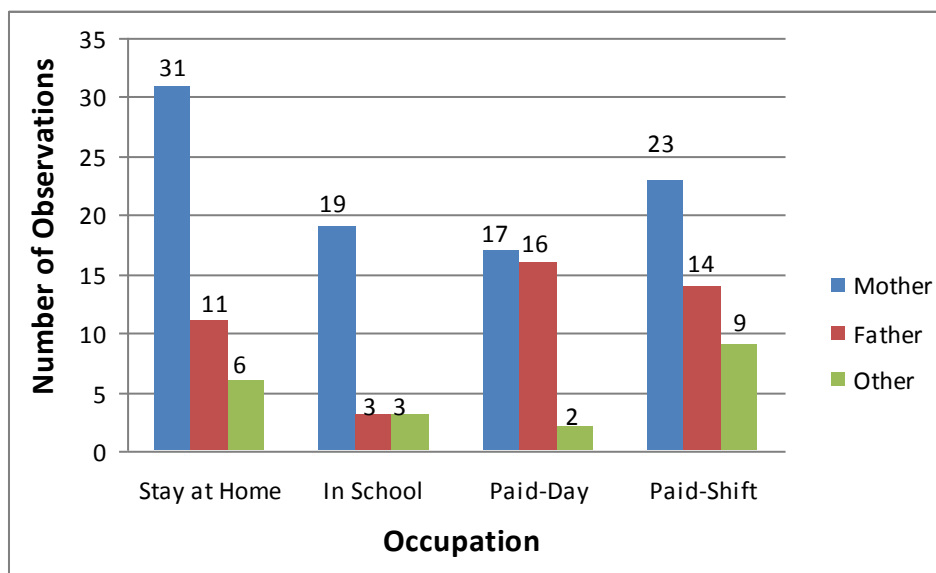


Figure 8: Adults' Occupation

This combined demographic information reveals a population of young people whose socio-economic status is well below the average in Ottawa.

3.3 Schooling

Education in Ontario is a major provincial undertaking. Schooling is compulsory for all young people up to the age of 18 years, and it is therefore not surprising that 98 survey respondents reported currently being in school. Of the remaining two, one had recently graduated from high school and was working, and the other had dropped out of high school. The survey participants who were still in school were attending a variety of educational institutions in Ottawa (Figure 9). These included 15 different public schools and 4 post-secondary institutions. Of these, however, 57% of the participants reported attending only four particular public secondary institutions: Notre Dame Catholic High School, Woodroffe High School, D. Roy Kennedy Public School (a primary school adjacent to Britannia Woods), and École secondaire publique Deslauriers. In addition, 15 % of the respondents reported attending a post-secondary institution (either Carleton University, University of Ottawa, Algonquin College, or Cité Collégiale).

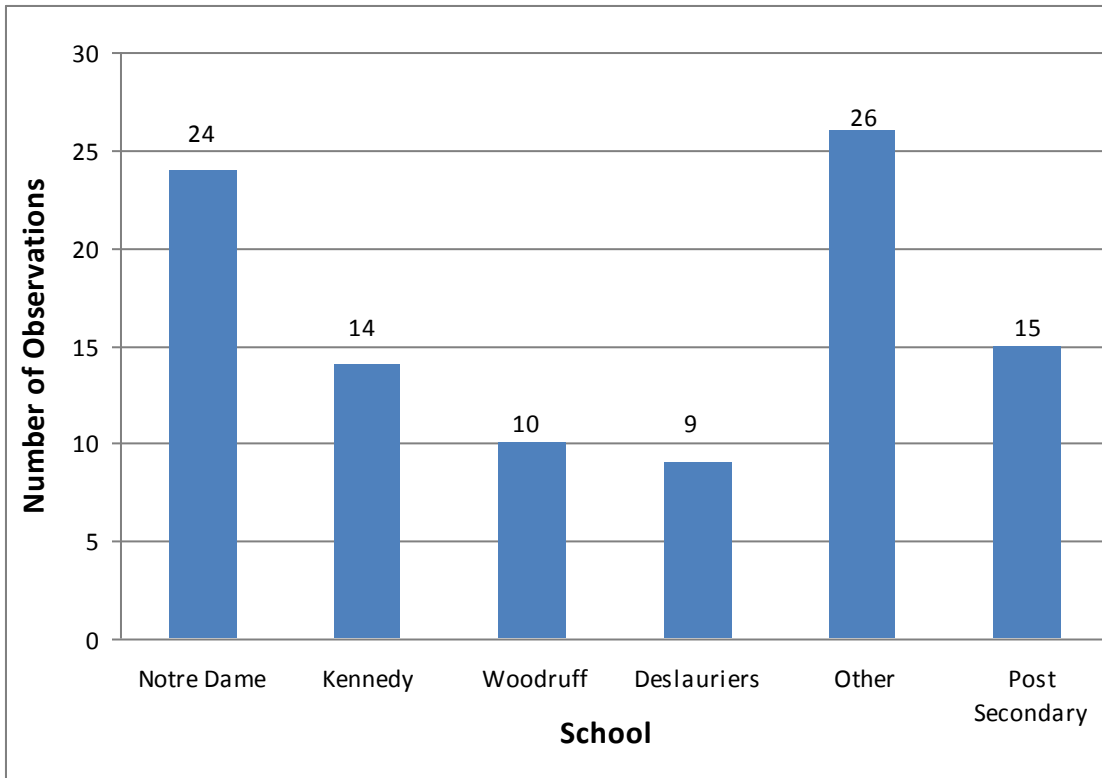


Figure 9: School Distribution

The average school grade of the youth attending primary and secondary schooling was 9.22 or grade 9. The youth in post-secondary schools were either in their first or second year of study (Figure 10).

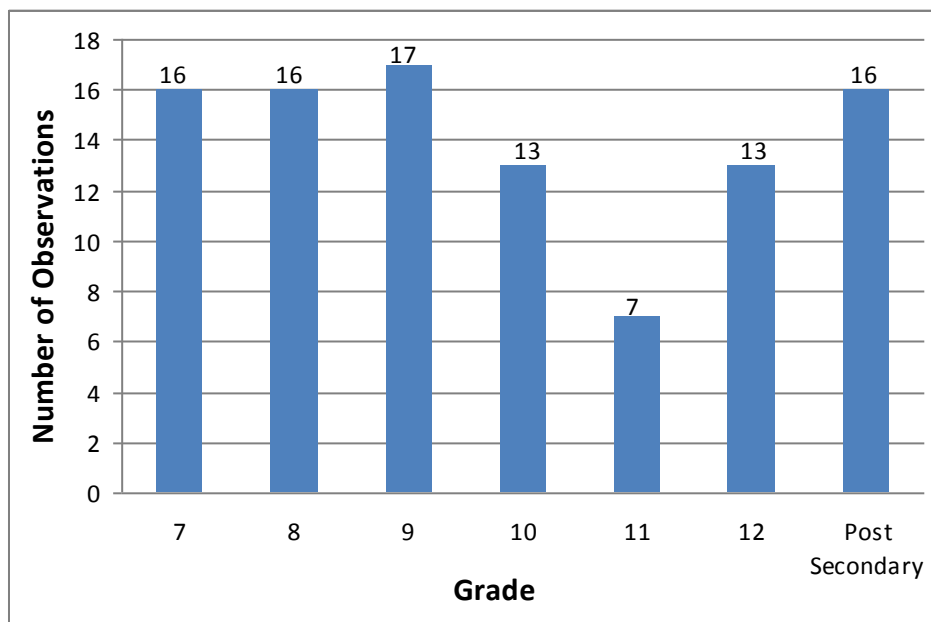


Figure 10: Grade Distribution

When asked about school attendance, 93% of participants reported attending school either “every day” or “most days”. Only three participants reported being frequently absent from school (Table 1).

Table 1: School Attendance

Attendance	Responses
Frequent truancy	3
Most days	14
Everyday	79

The youth were also asked to rank how much they liked school on a four-point discrete scale. This revealed that 88% (out of 97 responses) gave a “Like” rating for school as “very much” or “okay”, both of which are considered positive ratings (Table 2).

Table 2: “Like” Rating for School

Like School	Responses
Absolutely not	3
Not a lot	6
It’s okay	53
Very much	35

Further analysis indicated a positive correlation between school attendance and a positive attitude toward school (Table 3).

Table 3: School Attendance and Enjoyment

Attendance	Like rating	Responses	Percentages
Every day (79)	Very much	33	42%
	It's okay	39	49%
	Not a lot	5	6%
	Absolutely not	2	3%
Most days (15)	Very much	1	7%
	It's okay	12	80%
	Not a lot	1	7%
	Absolutely not	1	7%
Frequent truancy (3)	Very much	1	33%
	It's okay	2	66%
	Not a lot	0	0%
	Absolutely not	0	0%

What is evident in all these responses is that schooling is an important institution, and that most respondents have high levels of appreciation for education. Curiously, even the three individuals who indicated frequent truancy did not express antipathy to schooling (although this may have been due to the fact that they were being interviewed by peers who are successful in school). As a source of social capital formation, schooling is highly significant.

3.4 Britannia Woods Community House

It was evident from early on in the research project that, apart from schooling, Britannia Woods Community House (BWCH) is a key institutional affiliation for children and youth in the neighbourhood. A series of questions therefore focused on the community house.

The youth were first asked whether they had spent any time at the community house. 43 participants responded “occasionally” and three did not respond (Table 4). Among the remaining 54 respondents, 26 indicated that they came to BWCH 1 – 2 days per week, 18 said they visit 3 – 4 days a week, and 10 said they came everyday (Monday to Friday) (Table 4). The

survey also revealed that youth who come to BWCH at least one day a week had been attending fairly regularly for an average of 2.7 years (Table 5). These cumulative responses indicate that approximately half the youth respondents were actively affiliated to the community house.

Table 4: How Often Do You Come to BWCH Each Week

Responses	Observations
No response	3
Occasionally	43
1-2 days per week	26
3-4 days per week	18
Almost every day	10

Table 5: For How Long Have You Been Coming to BWCH

Responses	Observations
No response	2
Less than 1 year	26
1 year	8
2 years	14
3 years	14
4 years	14
5 years	5
6 years or more	17

Regardless of the length of time they frequented the community house, the participants were asked to give BWCH a ranking in terms of its support for young people. This ranking was placed on a five point discrete scale with “Excellent” being the highest and “Not Good” being the lowest. 88 of the participants responded to this question, of whom 81 ranked BWCH as “Excellent”, “Very Good”, and “Good”. The average of the 88 responses was 3.7 out of 5, or between “Good” and “Very Good”. None of the participants (0) responded that BWCH is “Not Good” (Table 6).

Table 6: How Do You Rate BWCH in Terms of Support for You?

Responses	Observations	Percentage
No response	12	-
Not Good	0	0%
Fair	7	8.0%
Good	35	39.8%
Very good	28	31.8%
Excellent	18	20.5%

The responses were analyzed to see if individuals who had lived in the community longer ranked BWCH more positively than those who had not lived in the community as long. It was found that for those participants who had lived in the community for more than three years, 90% ranked BWCH positively. For those participants who had lived in the community for less than three years, 73% ranked BWCH positively (Table 7). Although both groups ranked BWCH highly, this does suggest that the longer a participant has lived in the community the more positive he or she associates the services at BWCH.

What is clear from these responses is that the great majority of young people in Britannia Woods consider the community house to be a significant source of attachment and support for them.

Table 7: Attendance at BWCH

Have You Spent Time At BWCH?	How Often Do You Come to BWCH Each Week	For How Long Have You Been Coming to BWCH?	How Do You Rate BWCH in Terms of Support for You?
Response Number	Response Number Percentage	Response Number Percentage	Response Number Percentage
Yes 72	No Response 3 -	No Response 2 -	No Response 12 -
No 28	Almost Never 43 44.3%	Less Than 1 Year 26 26.5%	Not Good 0 0
	1-2 Days Per Week 26 26.8%	1 Year 8 8.2%	Fair 7 8.0%
	3-4 Days Per Week 18 18.6%	2 Years 14 14.3%	Good 35 39.8%
	Almost Every Day 10 10.3%	3 Years 14 14.3%	Very Good 28 31.8%
	Average: 1-2 Days Per Week	4 Years 14 14.3%	Excellent 18 20.5%
		5 Years 5 5.1%	Average: Good - Very Good
		6 Years Or More 17 17.3%	
		Average: 2.66 Years	

3.5 Other Institutional Affiliations

The youth respondents were asked about other affiliations, institutions, or organized activities that they were involved in at the time of the survey. These included community houses other than BWCH, recreational centres, sports teams, clubs, and art/music groups. They were also asked about their attendance at church, mosque, or synagogue. Following responses to these questions, they were then asked to indicate their frequency of attendance or participation, and their level of enjoyment in attending or participating, on a four-point discrete scale. The results, significant findings, and analysis are described in the following sections. (It is important to remember that in numerous instances respondents answered that they had more than one institutional affiliation).

Recreation Centres

Other than school and the BWCH, the affiliations with the highest levels of attendance (60 respondents) were recreational centres which are funded by the City of Ottawa and offer a range of learning, sports, and artistic activities for people of all ages. By far the most commonly cited recreation centres were the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club (57 respondents), both long established organizations in Ottawa that offer a multitude of activities for young people. In terms of their enjoyment, the respondents gave an average rank of 3.49 out of 4 for recreation centres.

Organized Sports, Art/Music, and Special Interest Clubs

37 participants reported playing organized sports, 15 participants reported attending any type of art/music clubs or lessons, and 19 participants reported attending other types of clubs at the time of the survey. This was substantially less than those who indicated their participation in recreational centres. This is not surprising, however, in light of the scheduled nature of these affiliations, requiring youth to attend at pre-determined specific times, and to frequently pay at least nominal participation fees. This contrasts to the more open-ended free-of-charge mandate of the community houses and recreation centers.

Despite the lower attendance levels reported, these affiliations had the highest “Like” rating respectively. Youth who participated in organized sports gave an average rank of 3.82 out of 4; those who participated in art and/or music clubs or lessons gave these an average ranking of 3.8 out of 4; and those who participated in other special interest clubs gave these an average ranking of 3.52 out of 4. These high average rankings might again be associated with the nature of these affiliations and activities. More specifically, because of the scheduled nature of these activities and the commitment necessary from the youth who participate, it would seem appropriate to

assume that those who continue to participate are individuals who are enthusiastic about these activities.

Other Community Houses

Apart from BWCH, 29 participants reported visiting another community house, with the majority (27) attending the Michele Heights Community House, located in a social housing neighbourhood in close proximity to Britannia Woods. This group of respondents gave an average ranking of 3 out of 4 for other community houses.

Altogether, these results indicate that these other institutional affiliations, located outside of Britannia Woods, are viewed very favorably by the majority of the youth who associate with them.

Church/Mosque/Synagogue

The youth were asked about their attendance at places of worship in order to determine their association with religious affiliations. 72 participants responded that they attended church, mosque, or synagogue, and provided the frequencies of their attendance (Table 8).

Table 8: General Religious Affiliation Attendance

Attendance	Frequency of Attendance	Observations
No	N/A	28
Yes	No response	5
Yes	Rarely	3
Yes	Sometimes	28
Yes	Often	15
Yes	Very Often	21

The 72 participants who responded positively were then asked to rank their levels of enjoyment in attending places of worship. Responses to this question were also rated on the same four-point discrete scale. The average “Like” rating of religious affiliations was 3.37 out of 4. This ranking indicates that a majority of the youth in Britannia Woods feel positively about attending church, mosque or synagogue.

The frequency of attendance and variations in attitude towards attendance were then compared to see if there was a relationship between the two (Table 9). The results suggest that those individuals who attend church, mosque, or synagogue more often “like” attending these places of worship more than those who attend rarely. There is a correlation, therefore, between attendance

at places of worship and the extent to which individuals value religious affiliations. Again, this is not surprising in that there is a strong voluntarist element in active affiliation with religious institutions.

Table 9: Enjoyment of Religious Affiliation versus Attendance

Attendance	Like rating	Observations	Percentage
Very Often	Not at all	0	0%
(21)	Not much	0	0%
	Somewhat	3	14%
	A lot	18	86%
	Blank	0	0%
Often	Not at all	0	0%
(15)	Not much	2	13%
	Somewhat	3	20%
	A lot	9	60%
	Blank	1	7%
Sometimes	Not at all	0	0%
(28)	Not much	1	4%
	Somewhat	8	29%
	A lot	19	68%
	Blank	0	0%
Rarely	Not at all	0	0%
(3)	Not much	2	67%
	Somewhat	1	33%
	A lot	0	0%
	Blank	0	0%

3.6 Comparison of Institutional Affiliations

In order to investigate whether one particular affiliation stands out as having a substantial influence on youth, the affiliations noted above were compared in terms of attendance and “Like” ratings. Because school attendance is mandatory up to the age of 16 years in Ontario, the strongest affiliation among the 100 youth respondents was with schooling. Yet after schooling, the majority of our respondents were most closely affiliated with BWCH. This was not unexpected as BWCH is a central part of Britannia Woods community.

Each individual affiliation was also ranked according to the average “Like” ratings. Table 10 lists the affiliations, the number of youth who reported participating in each affiliation, and the average “Like” rating for each. It is clear from this figure that the average “Like” ratings can all be considered positive regardless of the number of participants.

Table 10: Average Like Ratings and Participant Count by Type of Affiliation

Affiliation	Number who Participate	Average Like Rating
Sports	37	3.82
Art/Music	15	3.80
Clubs	19	3.52
Recreation Centers	60	3.49
Religious Affiliations	72	3.37
Community Houses	29	3.00
BWCH	88	3.70

As noted above, each respondent was permitted to indicate any number of institutional affiliations. We therefore decided to examine the average number of affiliations with the average “Like” ratings pertaining to these affiliations. This was to see if there was an optimum number of affiliations correlated with a significantly higher “Like” rating. However, as Table 11 shows, the average “Like” ratings do not vary in any significant way in relation to the number of institutional affiliations among the 100 youth respondents.

Table 11: Average Like Ratings and Participant Count by Number of Affiliations

Number of Affiliations	Number of Participants	Average Like Rating
0	3	-
1	6	3.07
2	19	3.06
3	30	3.25
4	16	3.40
5	11	3.45
6	7	3.43
7	5	3.50
8	2	3.65
9	1	3.67
		Total Average = 3.29

Table 12: Comparative Attendance Rates

Type Of Affiliation	Interviewees Attending	Average Attendance	Average Like
Community House	29	Often - Sometimes	Somewhat
Recreation Centre	60	Often - Sometimes	A Lot - Somewhat
Sports	36	Very Often - Often	A Lot
Club	19	Very Often - Often	A Lot - Somewhat
Church/Mosque	67	Often	A Lot - Somewhat
Art/Music	15	Very Often - Often	A Lot

3.7 Police and the Community

When the youth were questioned about the frequency of contact they have with the police in their community, 61/97 (63%) responded that their contact with the police ranges from “Often” to “Very Often”, demonstrating the relatively high levels of contact with police in the community. Questioned on what roles the police play in the community, the highest number of respondents (66%) referred to “security”, the second highest number (48%) indicated the police as “problem solver”, and the lowest number (31%) referred to the police as “bothersome”. Further analysis of the data showed that many of the youth who indicated that they have frequent contact with the

police also described the police as “bothersome”. The results of the survey also showed that individuals who have lived in the community for two years or less were more likely to describe the role of the police as advisors to the youth and community, whereas youth who have lived in the community for lengthier periods of time tend to have a more negative perception of the police.

3.8 Employment

The youth respondents were also asked about employment and whether they currently work or have worked in the summer during school holidays (July – August). 22 of the participants reported having or previously having a job. Those who were employed reported working an average of 19 hours per week. This number may seem high, but it also includes those participants who have graduated from high school and are working part-time while pursuing post-secondary education or full-time during the four-month period of college break (May – August). When those who reported not being employed were asked why they did not have a job, the majority of responses (39/49) indicated that either they could not find a job, were focused on school, or were too young.

3.9 Personal Relationships

The results from the Likert Scale portion of the interview demonstrated some significant findings in terms of the relationships that are important in the participants’ lives. The responses were analyzed by assigning a numerical code to the responses (0=no response, 1=Not at all, 2=Hardly ever, 3=Not very often, 4=Very often, and 5=Always) and then averaging the results, without zero, to determine aggregate sentiments of the participants who responded to each question.

Findings revealed that both mothers and fathers are very important in the lives of youth in Britannia Woods. More specifically, respondents ranked their relationships with their mothers as very loving, 4.9/5.0, helpful 4.7/5.0, and fair 4.5/5.0 and their fathers similarly loving 4.5/5.0, helpful 4.3/5.0, and fair 4.1/5.0, with both the relationships making the participants feel happy, inspired, and safe (greater than 4.0 on all accounts for both mother and father).

Other results indicate that peer relationships are very important. Similarly, relationships with religious leaders ranked relatively high. In contrast, relationships with other adults (teachers, sports coach, and BWCH staff) ranked lower.

3.10 Outlook on Life

The survey respondents were asked several opened-ended questions about what they felt were good things in their lives and what they felt was not so good in their lives. The responses were grouped and categorized, and are summarized in Tables 13 and 14. As shown in Table 13, by far the most respondents referred to family, or a specific family member, as a “Good Thing” in their lives. Further down the scale were peers/friends and school, and next was the response “everything”. As outlined in Table 14, the biggest concern related to poor academic performance at school (26 respondents). This contrasted sharply with the reference to “people”

or “teachers” in the school, an issue only one respondent indicated was a problem. Clearly, school is valued as a social venue; anxiety relates to what the respondents themselves understand

is significant for them in terms of their long term success. Interestingly, the next largest number of responses (20) was: “everything good/no difficulties”, and 18 respondents did not respond at all to the question. Responses related to other difficulties were far fewer in number.

Table 13: Good Things in Your life

Types of Response	Observations
No response or “nothing”	8
Peers/Friends	10
School	10
Education at school	2
Friends/people at school	1
Family/parents/mom/dad/siblings	54
Everything	7
Working	1
Religion	1
Possessions	3
Personal accomplishments	2
Health	1

Table 14: Not-so-Good Things in Your Life

Type of Responses	Observations
No response	18
People, relationships with people	8
Personal appearance	1
Everything good/no difficulties	20
School (academic)	26
School (people or teachers)	1
Family problems	6
Police/court	3
Money issues/Finding a job	6
Health	2
Chores	2
Balancing life, life overwhelming	7

3.11 Future Goals

The youth were asked about short term and long term goals. Their responses were categorized and grouped as outlined in Tables 15 and 16. Of significance is that almost 50% of participants want to improve their academics in the short term, and 79% aspire to have a career or a well-paying job as a long term goal.

Table 15: Short Term Goals

Type of Responses	Observations
No response/has not thought about it	5
Job/money	23
Academic	49
Personal improvement	7
Physical improvement	2
Talent improvement	7
Seeing or spending time with someone special	2
Travel	6

Table 16: Long Term Goals

Type of Responses	Observations
No response	2
Academic	7
Career professional	56
Career, no specifics	23
Possessions	2
Personal/family goals	4
No idea/has not decided	5
Travel	1

3.12 Conclusion

The survey results show that despite circumstances of poverty or near-poverty, where fewer than half the households in the Britannia Woods are headed by both parents, where social housing infrastructure is less than ideal, and where night-time drug dealing and occasional incidents of violence occur in the community, youth are largely well adjusted and cared for. They indicate close attachment to family and friends, and are almost all engaged in school and in other forms of learning, recreational, and social activities. They likewise confirm that for the most part they feel themselves supported by the adults with whom they are in routine contact – parents, teachers, community house and recreational staff, and personnel in places of worship. All of this is indicative of a broad institutional and social environment, exemplified by compulsory good quality schooling and the availability of many community and city-wide centres offering of a host of out-of-school activities and recreational opportunities for children and youth. It is a social ecology that appears to be highly conducive to the formation of youth social capital in low-income neighbourhoods such as Britannia Woods.

IV. YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

4.1 Overview

In order to further assess aspects of social capital formation that were articulated in the survey a series of focus group interviews were conducted with some of the same youth who participated in the survey. The focus groups attempted to further explore the issues raised in the questionnaire and to provide the opportunity for these young people to expand on their views about life in Britannica Woods (or “Ritchie” as the youth call the neighbourhood), their beliefs about school, community, and what improvements they would like to see in their neighbourhood. (See Appendix 1 for the focus group protocol).

Five focus groups took place during May – June 2010 and were organized by age and gender: two with girls aged 13-15 and aged 14-17 respectively, two with boys aged 13 – 16 and 15-17 respectively, and one with girls and boys aged 15 - 19. While conducted in an informal manner, allowing for a natural flow of conversation, they were nonetheless guided by a set of interview protocols (Appendix 2). Each focus group was lead by two individuals, a University of Ottawa researcher and a youth research assistant from Britannia Woods. Gender sensitivities were avoided by having the group leaders’ genders match that of the focus group participants. As with the earlier survey, youth respondents were required to provide their own consent as well as that of their parents prior to participating in the focus groups. At the beginning of each group, the objectives were explained to the youth and any questions about the interview/discussion procedure answered; the importance of confidentiality was underlined and youth were asked to respect the confidentiality of the other participants. Each focus group was recorded and transcribed by the research assistants. At the termination of each focus group, the participants were given a \$10 movie pass for their participation. The following is an analysis of the main thematic findings that emerged from the focus group discussions.

4.2 Mixed Perceptions of Britannia Woods (“Ritchie”)

The respondents expressed mixed sentiments about Britannia Woods which they commonly refer to as “Ritchie”, the name of an adjacent street. A shared concern was the issue of security as these statements indicate:

Bad things happen in our neighbourhood. Sometimes you can’t even walk out by yourself.

Sometimes like my mom she can’t even let us go far because my little brothers, they are really young, she can’t even barely let them out to go into the backyard from the front because people . . . that aren’t supposed to be near your house, crowd around your house. And they swear and stuff. So my mum has to be careful where she lets them go.

One respondent added that the neighbourhood is “too ghetto”, and when asked to clarify, she explained that she meant there were “too many drug dealers” entering the neighbourhood, particularly at night.

Despite the genuine concerns about security and bouts of criminal activity, all of the respondents indicated that many public pronouncements concerning the problems of Ritchie have been exaggerated, the result of unfounded rumour and occasional media hype over rare incidents of violence.

They [media] transform it . . . like sometimes when people at school they ask you 'You live in Ritchie?' and they always think it's a bad neighbourhood 'cause you live there, but they don't know what's really going on. So the way the media transforms the news it's like in a bad way.

Some people think that it's a bad place, 'cause last year there was this newspaper, it had this thing saying like the baddest neighbourhoods and like they put Ritchie as number one.

People think its bad... Whenever they hear Ritchie they're like 'Oh my gosh, do people shoot guns there too?' People actually think there's a bunch of gangsters in Ritchie. Like they think there's a bunch of gangsters, drug dealers, stuff like that.

Exemplifying the effects of this negative reputation was a widely circulated story within the neighbourhood concerning the refusal of a Pizza delivery outlet to deliver food after dark to homes in Britannia Woods. This story was recounted by several of the respondents, one of whom said the following:

No pizza after 7:00, they cancelled the delivery from Pizza Pizza now. They don't come after 7:00. Something happened last time with the people, I don't know. Its not us, but some people ordered pizza...and then the guy brought it and he got beat up and they took his money and that's how everything started.

The reputation of Ritchie as a low-income social housing complex that is prone to violence and drug dealing is one that all the respondents indicated was a source of frustration for them personally, for it has tarnished them with the brush of negative stereotyping.

It's just that the people....They judge you.

. . . your friends, [if] you ask them to come over, or they're like, 'Oh, can I come to your house after school.' And then they'll be like, 'Oh, where do you live?' And then you're like, 'Ritchie.' They're ok with it right, but then they go to their parents and ask if they can sleep over. And when [the parents] ask where [we] live, and [the friends] say Ritchie, [the parents] say no. So they are stereotyping us.

For some respondents, the negative stigma associated with Britannia Woods as a neighbourhood is such that they will simply avoid indicating where they live or lie about it.

And I don't let people know that I'm from Ritchie because they'll get a bad perception of who we are.

I tell them I live in Bayshore [another neighbourhood].

Overall, most of the respondents expressed the view that the popular stereotype of Britannia Woods as a dangerous, crime-ridden neighbourhood was either unwarranted, or overblown. While clearly some were concerned about incidents of criminal activity, most indicated that this was not as serious a problem as presumably it once had been. This statement reflected the sentiments of most of the respondents.

. . . back then there was a lot of people that were really bad, and when people used to live here they would say that Ritchie is bad. But now most of them are all gone, so [outsiders] don't understand. They don't live here so they don't really know.

Despite their concerns about the reputation of the Britannia Woods, the majority of the youth who participated in the focus groups expressed a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and their appreciation for its demographic diversity.

I like the fact that there are different races. And that it is multi-cultural, and that there are a lot of kids here your age...and you can play basketball.

It's the best neighbourhood to grow up in man.

When asked about whether they felt that there were sufficient opportunities for youth to be involved in making positive change in their neighbourhood, some were fully affirmative in their responses, pointing to fundraisers they had initiated for specific projects, or involvement in community house decision-making forums. Others offered a more qualified response, indicating that the idea of youth as agents of community change in Britannia Woods was a possibility, but only when working in collaboration with other youth and with adults. As one respondent indicated, adults held positions of power, and when they had negative perceptions of youth, and regarded many adolescents as delinquent, there was little that young people could do constructively. Overall, however, all the respondents regarded many of the adults with whom they are affiliated, particularly those associated with the community house, as highly supportive of youth in the community.

4.3 Relations with the Police

In view of Britannia Woods' reputation as a night-time venue of drug-dealing and periodic bouts of violence, police are frequently present in the neighbourhood. Since there is a tendency for police to focus on youth as potential sources of trouble, the focus group respondents were asked about their perceptions of the police. Many of them expressed negative perceptions of the police, in part because of what some see as unfair police stereotyping of young males in Britannia Woods, but more especially because of what they consider to be ineffectual policing.

If someone calls the cops on you for a fight or something, they automatically assume that you're doing drugs or something...just because you're from Ritchie.

Then when you need them they're not really there for you 'cause once not long ago my brother got bitten by a dog. Then we tried to call the police 'cause they could do something about it to the owners of the dog. But, then the police just said we don't know if the dog got loose or let go on purpose so we can't do anything. But if it was something related to youth you know he would take on any youth he could find in the street and start harassing him and ask him questions, but when you need them they're like powerless.

Others, however, admit that the ineffectual role of the police is often due to the fear of community residents to speak up and testify. As police are seen as a threat to trouble-makers, those who call the police may be subject to subsequent harassment:

Like if somebody finds out that you called the cops on them, or someone doesn't like you because your kid did something to their kid, they'll break your window or something. Because my mom called security on some people before and we got our windows broken.

We also got our windows broken for no reason. I just moved in for a year and we had a family movie night and we were all sleeping in the living room, and I was sleeping under the window and the glass broke and I was so scared. I started crying and the police came and they said it was ok, and they said that they can't look for fingerprints or anything and then they just left.

Not all security forces were viewed in the same way. Most of the respondents differentiated the Ottawa City police from unarmed neighbourhood community police who are hired by Ottawa Community Housing Corporation to patrol low-income social housing communities.

Like the security guards are chill with us, they understand what we are going through. But then the cops come and ohhh . . .

Several of the older youth had a less critical view of police overall. As this observation indicates, incidents of crime create inevitable situations of tension, often between those who are victims or unwitting bystanders of crime, and those who require local assistance in confounding the perpetrators of crime.

Sometimes [the police] ask you questions [even if] you weren't even there, or sometimes they're just trying to help. Just trying to find what they need to find so they can do their job you know, 'cause you know there's some bad things that actually happen in this neighbourhood and a police can't really find it you know.

4.4 Britannia Woods Community House (BWCH)

As the findings of the youth social capital survey indicate a widespread view of BWCH as being a key resource for children and adolescents in Britannia Woods, in the focus group sessions we reiterated several questions concerning the community house – specifically regarding the significance of BWCH for youth, on the frequency that youth visited the community house, on relations with BWCH staff, and on ways that community house services might be improved. Consistent with the data from the survey, the focus group respondents generally regarded BWCH as a positive place for them to visit, a centre that “helps kids”, “keeps them out of trouble”, and “teaches them right from wrong”. There was likewise unanimity in appreciation for the eclectic activities organized by the community centre. This sense of eclecticism was exemplified by one respondent’s comment that BWCH staff “do soccer, organize soccer teams, leagues, camps, computers, print homework, food bank”. Likewise, as another respondents commented:

It’s your source of entertainment. You know you wake up you go play 3-on-3 and then you go back to youth programs, go back to leadership. You know its open basically all day so, you know, you’re there most of the day... I think its more a sanctuary for children to stay out of trouble.

Most notable about the commentary on BWCH were the sentiments of respect and affection for community house personnel, which fully reinforced our own extensive observations. Two comments captured the common views of all the respondents:

I go to the community centre [for] some information that I need, that I need help with so they help me along with it. Or like if you need a job or something you go to them and they help you with the thing.

The staff there, they’re always nice to you. They’re there when you need them.

In response to the question as to what they would like to see in term of improvements in community house services, the respondents collectively indicated that they would like to see an enlargement of community house space, to have more physical resources (e.g., computers), and more possibilities for BWCH-organized group outings (i.e., bus trips to interesting venues and special recreational activities).

4.5 Affiliations Beyond the Neighbourhood

When asked about other organized recreational, educational or social activities either in the community of Britannia Woods or elsewhere in Ottawa, most of the focus group participants indicate that there was little beyond BWCH. As one respondent put it succinctly:

I can’t really think of anything to be honest either, just like the community house is really all we have.

Nevertheless, when pressed, some respondents spoke about the Boys and Girls Club, about participating in sports camps in the summer, or local sports leagues, and occasionally visiting

drop-in centres outside of Ritchie, such as Michelle Heights Community Centre. What emerged as evident in the focus groups, however, was that while Britannia Woods youth are indeed affiliated with other institutional youth organizations and activities outside their own community, for most young people these are not as significant or as prominent sources of regular sources of institutional support as is BWCH that is located within a few paces of their own homes and thus is easily accessible.

School and Teachers

All but one of the focus group participants were attending some form of secondary or post-secondary education, ranging from grade 8 to first-year university education. One participant indicated that he had dropped out of school, although he stated his intention to resume his schooling again.

Some of the younger respondents indicated that they did not like school for a number of reasons – usually because they did not do well in a particular subject (e.g., math) or because of disciplinary problems. One respondent spoke about being the object of a racist jab by a teacher:

I just don't like school because of the teachers are not very nice. Like they're nice, but some teachers are racist and stuff like that. I had an incident where I told some kid, I was being sarcastic, and my teacher said, 'Go back to the streets, with your ghetto friends.' She was saying 'Your ghetto accent.'

References were also made to teachers' negative images of Britannia Woods and prejudicial stereotypes that this can generate about youth living in this neighbourhood.

And then they think Ritchie kids are poor.

My teacher told me to go back to my street. She's like go back to Ritchie or whatever. She said, 'Look at you guys, and your slang language.' And everyone actually got really mad.

Other problems – bullying, drug dealing and consumption, theft, and violence – were cited as sporadic problems that youth have sometimes experienced or witnessed in school.

Some respondents, however, frankly admitted that the difficulties they had experienced in school were often attributable to themselves, largely due either to due minor behavioural problems, to tardiness or unexplained absenteeism, or to poor work habits. As these two statements underscore, ironically youthful frustration that stems from teachers' insistence on accountability for school work is a natural consequence of what is often good teaching and mentorship.

What I don't like is, like teachers are good people, most of them, and they're doing their job, but I guess its my fault too, but what I don't like is when I don't want to do homework or some kind of work and then they come back to you, you know? . . . they're doing their job, but that's what I don't like about them.

I have that teacher that's sort of annoying, but he's a good guy, but annoying man, you know. Like let's say that day I didn't do that homework, he would come the next day, ask me, I'd say 'No, no, no.' Like he knows . . . I don't even care about his homework, but then . . . maybe he calls my parents you know.

I hate a few and I like a few. Some of them I can understand what they're talking about and the rest I just don't understand them and I don't really like their attitude so I have to give them attitude.

Despite these anecdotal complaints, it was clear that not only did all the focus group respondents appreciate school for what it offered – a chance for a good education and the lifelong benefits that could accrue from this – but that they generally were happy with the social atmosphere of school and the mentorship of many of the teachers.

I like it because my friends are there and we talk about stuff. Teachers are nice and supportive.

A good teacher would be a person that's like serious, you know. If he tells you to do something, you do it serious.

I like teachers that have experience and they could adjust to different situations 'cause not everybody's the same.

These sentiments were articulated especially by the older respondents who were reaching the end of their high school education, or had recently begun post-secondary education.

For me, it's to have an opportunity to learn, and things like different skills, so when I start working I can already have like the language, the writing, also reading, also communicating with other people that are around me. And also learn, like teachers how to get to that level of working, having an official job.

Place of Worship

As 67% of the participants who filled out the survey questionnaire answered that they frequently attended a place of worship, the focus group respondents were asked elaborate on this particular form of institutional affiliation. A few of respondents indicated that they were not interested in participating in activities of worship, at least one grumbled about being compelled by parents to attend church.

I understand going once in a while, but every time you go it's kind of annoying. Like I'm not saying...there's nothing wrong with God or anything, but like we are young and we should have time for ourselves.

Nevertheless, reflecting the survey responses, most of the focus group respondents spoke highly of the role of religion/worship in their lives, and about places of worship as sources of support.

When the pastor speaks you can understand it and you know where he's coming from, 'cause some churches you can go there but you never change, they're the same. [But] the church that I go to now . . . changed the way basically I used to think, you know? The way I used to see things is different than [before].

I get values, how to live a good life...and the values of things money can't buy, . . . basically how to take responsibility for stuff, set goals, achieve, maintain and keep myself.

4.6 Additional Reflections

In a more general sense, focus group participants were asked to comment on additional strengths and constraints related to youth support. Several respondents reiterated the complaints of their parents concerning the state of housing and public infrastructure – notably night-time lighting – in the neighbourhood. In particular, they spoke of repeated requests for assistance to Ottawa Community Housing, and to frequent and lengthy delays that families often had to endure before repairs were undertaken.

Our sink is broken, and my mom had to do it herself because they were taking too long.

We have this little hole in our ground. My little sister, she's only two, and she fell and she almost broke[her arm] and it was like all bruised. And they took three years to actually fix it.

Yet overall, respondents felt that organizations and individuals working on their behalf were beneficial. In particular, as one respondent indicated, informal individual communication with supportive adults is often reassuring.

If you really have someone to actually talk to one-on-one [whom] you know, and tell them what your goals are in life and what you want to do, maybe they're willing to help you or bring you to a person who will help you and will get you to your destiny.

When asked to envisage how this research project might be beneficial for them or the community, several expressed the hope that it would generate more resources for the community house, while others suggested that it might lead to greater understanding and enhancement of the reputation of Britannia Woods.

I hope that the community will be a better place than it is right now. And hopefully in the future it will be a better place where someone can actually come in and . . . can say it's like a really good neighbourhood. Like there's different cultures, like if you [outsiders] can see [that] each and every one of us

is from different countries. So yeah if you come all from different countries then how do you work and how do you see it work and what really goes on. Then we can know each other as a community and where we are born and stuff like that.

Maybe for people to understand that we are not all violent, and that we care about stuff...though we live in the ghetto, we are not ghetto.

4.7 Conclusion

In the focus group discussions, most respondents indicated positive feelings about their neighbourhood, but were nonetheless sensitive to negative outside stereotypes as reflected in occasional media reports and, apparently, in the perceptions of some teachers. Yet although most participants acknowledged that criminal acts and occasional violence do occur in Britannia Woods, the general perspective was that external groups bring crime into the neighbourhood and victimize residents. Crime was not viewed as a “home-grown” problem, but rather an export from outside that did not involve or threaten them personally. In this context, however, they did not hold city police in high regard, considering them to be largely ineffectual in alleviating crime or assisting residents. On the other hand, they expressed more respect for OCH community police whom they viewed as having more visibility in the neighbourhood and showing more empathy for tenants even though they have fewer powers than do city police.

Schools and teacher clearly have a major influence on the lives of youth in Britannia Woods. All the focus group respondents were attending some form of secondary or post-secondary school at the time of these interviews, and they all remembered teachers who had supported them and encouraged them to succeed. Recollections of teachers who were unfair or intolerant were the exception rather than the rule.

Places of worship also played an important role in these youths’ lives and the majority referred to the benefits they gained from attending regularly. Britannia Woods Community House was likewise a very significant place for most youth participants. Most had benefited at one time or another from the variety of activities that were available in or through the community house, and all spoke highly of BWCH staff, commenting on the relationships of understanding, trust, and support that they extended to children and adolescents in the neighbourhood.

What these focus groups revealed was confirmation of the extensiveness of the institutional and personal relationships available to youth in Britannia Woods. BWCH in particular plays a significant role within the community. As most youth indicated, the main improvements that they could envisage for their neighbourhood, apart from infrastructure repairs and a better public image of the community, were more resources for the community house and an expansion of its programs to meet the diversity of youth needs. The issues of poverty, negative stereotyping and marginalization continue to trouble youth living in Britannia Woods, and incidents of crime are difficult to eradicate. Nevertheless, although this study did not attempt to correlate indicators of youth social capital formation with changes in the rate of youth crime and other consequences of risk such as school abandonment and drug addiction, it was evident that the great majority of youth in the neighbourhood feel themselves connected to supportive people and institutions, and

that by and large they possess self-confidence, a positive view of themselves, their families, and their neighbourhood, strong goal orientation, and a belief in their future.

What was also clear was is that the young people in Britannia Woods are affiliated to a broad system or *field* of child and youth support that connects institutions, local government, and civil society throughout much of the city of Ottawa. In effect, therefore, to fully comprehend the dynamics of youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods it is essential to grasp the social ecology of this field of support. Consequently, research for this study extended beyond the community of Britannia Woods in order to examine this field and to discern its specific connection with youth social capital formation in one low-income neighbourhood. We now turn to this next stage of our analysis.

V. THE FIELD OF YOUTH SOCIAL SERVICES AS A CATALYST OF YOUTH SOCIAL CAPITAL: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction: The Ecology of Youth Social Capital Formation

As we have seen in the previous sections, youth in Britannia Woods are involved in multiple relationships. These extend from the close inter-personal connections of family and peer companionship to the friendly, yet more supervisory ties developed with older people who are attached to organizations such as Britannia Woods Community House and to the various schools, recreation centres, and places of worship that they frequent. These relationships are the wellsprings of social capital that young people can draw upon for their own benefit. Yet although these personal social relations are critical foundations of understanding, trust and support, they are not sufficient on their own to induce social capital on a sustained and long term basis. This is because social relationships are themselves embedded in, and strongly affected by, broader social structures and environments. The extent to which youth are able to benefit from their social relationships is very much a function of the social ecology in which they are living. Understanding social capital therefore requires an appreciation of factors that are manifested beyond the proximate day-to-day experiences of young people. This has particular relevance for our study of youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods.

5.2 The Dimensions of Social Ecology: Structure, Agency, Habitus, and Field

In considering the ecological dimension of social capital formation, we draw on the concepts and insights of Pierre Bourdieu who highlighted the interconnectedness of social capital with diverse aspects of human organization and experience. As Bourdieu observed, there are deep-seated political, socio-economic, institutional, and ideological structures that strongly influence as well as constrain the nature and scope of opportunities available to individuals in any society. These structures are not equitable in modern urban societies – they often tend to reinforce the socio-economic discrepancies among social groups (Grenfill, 2009).

Nevertheless, while the actions and perspectives of people are shaped by the structures with which they are affiliated, individuals do possess agency – the inherent capacity for autonomous decision-making and action. This capacity is affected by personal beliefs and experiences, and by the influence of family, friends, and relationships. While structure and agency are conceptually distinctive, they are nonetheless interconnected. As human action is framed by the norms of established structures, so these structures are sustained and reproduced by agency (purposeful human action). Concurrently, however, since individuals and groups are differentiated and are capable of exercising choice and a degree of autonomy, agency can also serve to challenge and modify dominant structures. This interconnectedness of structure and agency, captured by the term structuration (Gayle, 1998; Giddens, 1983), has significant import for human relationships and the social capital that is generated from them.

Yet for Bourdieu, analysis of social capital requires consideration of two further dimensions of social interaction: *habitus* and *field*. *Habitus* is the set of learned dispositions and norms that guide thinking and actions. It is the impetus for agency. Acquired as a natural consequence of day-to-day socialization, *habitus* functions to rationalize and therefore reinforce prevailing social

arrangements regardless of the inequities that they engender. This is similar to the Gramscian concept of hegemony, wherein predominant ideas and norms are essential for sustaining established structures of power. Yet habitus 'is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period' (Navarro 2006: 16). Indeed, habitus is a critical facet of social change, for if the status quo is to be contested, an aggregation of attitudes and perspectives must embrace an alternative vision or set of social arrangements (Grenfill, 2009). This is akin to the notion of counter-hegemony and the oppositional convictions that propel social movements.

Intersected with habitus is the notion of *field*. As elaborated by Bourdieu (1986), fields consist of defined social spaces or sets of structured relationships that are distinctive and relatively autonomous from predominant power structures. Distinguished by shared interests and objectives, and often cutting across formal institutional boundaries, fields are epitomized by professional associations, common interest groups, and networks of civil society organizations. Through a common discourse these groups promote their mutual agendas and strive to maintain and strengthen their position through the acquisition of capital – usually financial capital, but also symbolic forms of social, cultural, and informational capital. Accordingly, fields may adhere to values and objectives that are distinctive from, and even counter to, the prevailing discourse of predominant economic and political power structures.

In this study of youth social capital formation in one low-income neighbourhood in the city of Ottawa, we discerned an influential field of child and youth support that extends across the city and engages a multitude of people, associations, and organizations. It is a field that cuts across governmental and nongovernmental services, and unites professionals and volunteers through a common and strikingly pronounced discourse which emphasizes the imperative of investing in and supporting all youth, particularly those who are living in potentially low-income circumstances and are vulnerable to risk. This contrasts with a current conservative national political orientation that has downplayed the issues of poverty and socio-economic inequity, and has advocated more punitive measures for youth crime.[FTE] In this chapter, we highlight the various dimensions of the discourse of this field of child and youth support. Our aim in doing so is to demonstrate how it has contributed significantly to the broad-based legitimacy of youth social capital formation as a focus of provincial and municipal government policy and as a worthy goal of urban civil society. In effect, youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods is very much a part of an influential discourse of youth support that extends across this city.

Throughout greater Ottawa there are hundreds of organizations mandated to provide services and assistance to youth in myriad different ways. For purposes of analysis, however, we selected a small number of institutions that are associated with BWCH and which, for the most part, have had extensive experience working with and for young people in Ottawa. Given the strong reputation of these institutions, and their variation in terms of size, program focus, and organizational mandates, we were satisfied that together they constitute a representative cross-section of the overall youth service provider system in the city. Data collection consisted of interviews with senior personnel of eleven organizations and the collation of documents, most of them available online, describing the objectives and program activities of the organizations. Analysis of the interview transcripts and the documents enabled us to identify nine principal themes that capture the common discourse of this field of youth services. These are:

- Shared awareness and concern about the risks confronting children and youth;
- Shared philosophy and goals that underscore assistance for at-risk and low-income youth;
- Common pursuit of institutional partnerships;
- Communication and collaboration with parents and families;
- The significance of mentorship;
- Necessity of youth participation;
- Close attention to the ongoing need for funding and resources;
- Acknowledgment of limitations and constraints of youth assistance programs;
- Recognition of progress achieved and the need to build on it.

These elements of a shared discourse, which will be discussed below, stems from a broader civic concern regarding problems associated with poverty and social marginalization, and a shared commitment to provide extensive services and supportive connections for vulnerable youth.

Before elaborating on the nine themes that constitute the discourse of child and youth support in Ottawa, it is useful to briefly consider the guiding principles that underlie provincial and municipal approaches to poverty reduction.

5.3 Poverty Reduction in Ottawa: Guiding Principles

In November 2008 the Ontario Government released a Poverty Reduction Strategy which articulated a goal of reducing child poverty by 25% in five years. A key stipulation of the strategy was that the provincial government would channel funding to municipal governments and community groups for local poverty reduction initiatives (City of Ottawa, 2009, p. 4). This was followed a year later by the release of a joint discussion paper, *Government Makes a Difference: Working Toward Poverty Reduction*, compiled by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA). Acknowledging the persistent reality of poverty among “the most vulnerable citizens”, the paper concluded that a combination of municipal government and local community engagement was critical for reducing the incidence of urban poverty:

Municipalities see this poverty first hand because we are on the front line of addressing poverty through the cost-shared and municipally funded programs we provide. Municipalities have many levers . . . *to integrate and coordinate service delivery, [to] build local capacity and cooperation, . . . [and to] mobilize and engage for change* (AMO, 2009, p. 3) (Author’s italics).

In accordance with these precepts, in 2009 Ottawa City Council approved the first phase of its own Poverty Reduction Strategy. To facilitate implementation of the strategy, a steering committee was established consisting of municipal government officials and representatives from different sectors of the city, including low-income neighbourhoods, immigrant communities, community organizations, schools, and the private sector. The composition of community representatives on the Poverty Reduction Steering Committee reflected the

significance accorded to the active involvement of citizens' groups in addressing problems confronting low-income families and communities, and in deliberations on local programs and activities. As outlined in its Executive Summary, the intent of the Ottawa Poverty Reduction Strategy is

to call on the City to take a leadership role in poverty reduction and investment in social infrastructure. . . . The Ottawa Poverty Reduction Strategy represents a first step in a collaborative effort to bring a high profile to poverty reduction in our community and take concrete actions at the municipal and community level. . . . [It] is unique because it builds on a decade of strengthening capacity by increasing *participation of people on low income in our community in initiatives to make their voices heard* (City of Ottawa, 2009, pp. 4 – 5) (Author's italics).

This emphasis on civic participation, partnership, and inclusiveness in the Ottawa strategy document is reiterated in the following articulated principles (Ibid., p. 20):

- All residents must be able . . . [to live] in dignity, safety and health, feeling included and having access to a range of opportunities to participate in community life.
- City [government] has a leadership role to play in poverty reduction and social infrastructure investment.
- The voices of people on low income need to be included in community initiatives.
- The community coming together to find local solutions based on collaboration, cooperation and opportunities for partnerships is the most effective way to create change at the local level.
- Local solutions must be responsive to the full diversity of the community.
- Efforts to raise public awareness as well as concrete actions contribute to poverty reduction.

Inherent in these principles is the idea of establishing and reinforcing supportive and mutually beneficial relationships that will translate into the mobilization of resources to redress the effects of poverty. *This is the discourse of social capital.* There is also an acknowledgment of the essential leadership role of municipal government in facilitating the formation of social capital among community groups.

The main strategic priorities outlined in the city's Poverty Reduction Strategy likewise incorporate these same themes. Strategy One focuses on the establishment of a service *system* that will be beneficial for people in need. Strategy Three emphasizes the need to break down the myths of poverty by increasing public awareness of poverty issues and promoting local actions to reduce poverty. Most significant in terms of social capital development is Strategy Two.

Entitled *Building a community of inclusion and belonging*, it focuses on the establishment and strengthening of social relationships and institutional networks through the following (Ibid., p. 6):

- Increased access to recreation for people on low-income.
- Bringing together school boards, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department, Children's Services, Crime Prevention Ottawa and community agencies to develop solutions to jointly create, program and coordinate increased community use of schools.
- Integration of immigrants and newcomers into the City of Ottawa's workforce; . . . and [implementation of] an equality framework and an equity lens across City departments.
- Increased investments in . . . social and affordable housing and housing with supports.

What is evident here is an acknowledgment of the social ecology of poverty, and the necessity for a strategy that is based on coordination and cooperation of organizations and associations at all levels, and that includes the establishment of a youth support network. The overall approach to poverty reduction in the city has contributed to a municipal ethos of youth social capital formation.

5.4 The Scope of Organized Youth Assistance in Ottawa

The system of youth assistance and support in Ottawa consists of hundreds of institutions, agencies, associations, and informal community groups. While the main focus of this report is to examine youth social capital formation in one low income neighbourhood, we have discerned a strong connection between the ties that youth in Britannia Woods have with specific organizations and community groups and what can be characterized as a city-wide network of youth support. It is a network that is bound together by a common discourse whose elements provide a powerful catalyst for youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods and many other neighbourhoods in the city. In order to elicit the key elements of this discourse we interviewed staff members of eleven youth service organizations and conducted an analysis of the mandates of several other organizations that are well established in Ottawa and are representative of the myriad organizations that constitute the youth support system in the city. Before outlining the elements of this common discourse, it is useful to provide a brief descriptive overview of these selected organizations.

5.4.1 Community Houses and Recreational Centres

There are many organizations offering a diverse range of recreational and educational programs for children and adolescents living in low-income communities in Ottawa. Specific programs invariably stem from the different mandates of youth service agencies and the volume and nature of resources available to them. At neighbourhood levels there is a network of 15 community

houses (Britannia Wood Community House being one) and 68 recreational centres, all of which provide after-school and summertime recreational and learning activities for children and youth.

As discussed in Part 2 of this report, the 15 community houses are represented by the Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses whose official slogan is: “Investing together in the future of our neighbourhoods”. Each community house in Ottawa is typically located in a townhouse where services and activities such as continuing education courses for adults, homework clubs for children, and space for weekday pre-school learning and daycare are offered. The community houses are likewise frequently involved in organizing trips and visits for young people – to sports events, music festivals, and seasonal activities such as skiing in winter, hikes and “sugar-bushing” in the spring, water-sliding and camping in the summer, and hay-rides in the fall. In addition to specific activities for young people, neighbourhood community houses function as intermediaries for other social services. As noted earlier, in Britannia Woods the community house serves as the venue for the weekly allotment of food from the Ottawa Food Bank and for the distribution of used children’s clothing. While most community houses receive financial assistance from sources such as the United Way, Ottawa Community Housing Corporation, and the City of Ottawa (which pays the salaries of Directors and stipends for part-time youth workers), community houses nonetheless generally operate on shoe-string budgets and therefore rely heavily on volunteer input from community residents and other interested citizens.

The recreation centres, which are largely funded by the City of Ottawa, offer a range of activities for people of all ages. For young people, the most common of these include sports (notably basketball, swimming, and skating), crafts and arts, music lessons and periodical music performances, computer accessibility (for homework and recreational use), public library facilities in some centres, and space to congregate informally with friends. Most recreational centres also provide some daycare space and pre-school learning activities for toddlers during weekdays. Similar to the community houses, and in line with the principles of inclusion outlined in the city’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, recreation centres also hire older teens from within each community as youth workers and mentors, either on a volunteer basis as part of school community service credits, or on short-term and summer contracts.

By extending a range of activities to young people, the community houses and recreation centres share a common aim in providing safe structured environments where young people can participate in sports, recreation and out-of-school learning.

5.4.2 Schooling

All children in the province of Ontario below the age of 16 years are obliged by law to attend school, essentially because levels of school achievement have major significance for the long term wellbeing of young people and for the province as a whole. Schools are therefore, after families, the most formative institutions to which young people are exposed. The principal mandate of schools, of course, is to provide classroom learning that will result in measurable academic achievement. Accordingly, in recognition of the interconnection between students’ scholastic performance and their lives at home and elsewhere in the community, schools in Ottawa have become increasingly open to the promotion of activities and relationships beyond

classroom walls that facilitate academic confidence and interest in schoolwork, and strengthen educational results. All four major public school boards¹² [have established partnership programs with numerous organizations and services in the city. Similarly, within individual schools, many principals and teachers seek connections with community organizations in order to enhance educational support for their students.¹³

Notre Dame High School

In order to exemplify the discourse of youth support that has become more evident in Ottawa schools, we directed our attention specifically to Notre Dame High School which is operated by the Ottawa – Carleton Catholic School Board and which many Britannia Woods adolescents have attended. With its motto, “A place for everyone”, Notre Dame is one of four Ottawa schools that received a Ministry of Education Urban Priority High Schools (UPHS) Grant which aims to expand assistance for students who are at risk of dropping out and whose families lack resources to support them. By augmenting the school’s operating budget, the grant has enabled Notre Dame to assist needy youth with the following:

- the acquisition of new school supplies and backpacks;
- a series of after-school programs that combine tutoring, recreation, and counseling; &
- various out-of-school activities such as field trips and overnight camping.

Most such opportunities would be out of reach for children and youth living in poverty.

Notre Dame is also an institutional participant in the Focus on Youth School Program, an Ontario government program that finances summer activities for students in high needs urban neighbourhoods. Involving partnership between schools and local communities, the program has allowed for the use of schools as recreation centres during the holiday summer months and has provided paid work for numerous high school students as recreational and custodial staff.

As part of our study, we interviewed three Notre Dame high school teachers who spoke about the significance of these various school-based activities for high needs youth, often in conjunction with other organizations and groups, and about active school outreach as essential to connect schools with local communities and families.

5.4.3 City-Wide Organizations

Besides neighbourhood-based organizations such as the community houses and city-funded recreation centres, there are many other organizations with mandates that provide services and opportunities for youth across the entire city. The following organizations exemplify the services and opportunities that are offered to youth living in different parts of the city.

¹² Ottawa-Carleton District School Board; Ottawa Catholic School Board; Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario; & **Conseil des écoles** catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est

¹³ As a professor for over 20 years in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, one of the authors (Maclure) is familiar with many of the schools and school personnel in the city.

Pathways : Out-of-School Educational Support

As education is deemed to be essential for the long term wellbeing of young people, and therefore a key basis for social capital formation, there are many community groups and centres that strive to strengthen youth adaptability to school environments and to enhance their scholastic abilities and performance. In recognition of the need to connect education and schooling with youth interests and their physical, psychological, and emotional make-up, community houses and numerous other organizations offer programs that integrate recreation, nutrition and counseling with tutorial and school homework assistance. Representative of this type of after-school educational support is the Pathways program that was established in Ottawa in 2007. At its core, this is a homework assistance organization that is connected closely to schools, communities, and families. Relying on a combination of a relatively small number of permanent staff, and a large cadre of volunteer tutors, Pathways has attained a considerable reputation as an institutional partner of schools and families.

Boys and Girls Club

The Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa provides after-school, weekend and summer recreational programs for children aged 6-18 years of age in many locations across the city. Employing a cadre of trained youth development specialists, the Club offers a blend of recreation and life-skills programs designed to assist in the development of self-esteem, healthy living, peer respect and cooperation, and a commitment to community participation. The Club provides programming for children (age 6-10), young adolescents (ages 11-13) and older teens (ages 14-18). Clubhouse times are set specifically for each age group and for older teens into the late evening hours in order to offer them safe and positive activities and opportunities.

Youth Services Bureau

The Youth Services Bureau (YSB), which was founded in 1960, bills itself as “one of the largest and most comprehensive non-profit agencies serving youth in this community”. With some 350 professionals and volunteers working in 20 different locations across the city, the YSB delivers an array of programs and services aimed mainly at young people aged 12 and above who face moderate to serious difficulties in their physical, social, and/or emotional development, including criminal charges and convictions. Its services include are the following:

- Emergency shelter, transitional housing, and supportive housing
- 24-hour regional crisis line and mobile response team
- Assistance in situations of family conflict and dysfunction
- Addictions counselling and harm-reduction programs
- Support for issues related to poverty, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and/or abuse
- Health and dental clinic, including HIV prevention services
- Intensive short- and long-term counselling for youth and families
- School-based mental health services
- Drop-in centres

- Job find programs
- Youth justice programs
- Youth advisory committees that foster leadership

As will be discussed below, a key feature of the YSB is the involvement of young people themselves in various youth advisory groups.

Christy Lake Kids

Christie Lake Kids has its origins as Christie Lake Camp which began in 1922 specifically to meet the needs of children living in poverty. The camp continues to this day, functioning with support from private donations and grants from provincial and municipal levels of government. Benefiting from Ottawa's close access to lakes and forests, the camp offers children living in low-income urban circumstances summertime experiences such as swimming, canoeing, camping, and connecting with forest ecology. In so doing, the camp aims to strengthen self-esteem and positive forms of peer interaction.

An offshoot of the camp is the Christy Lake Kids organization that essentially has extended a similar type of year-round recreational program, providing economically disadvantaged youth the necessary transportation and material assistance that will enable them to participate in organized sports, arts, and craft activities. The organization also provides a Leaders-in-Training program that enables older youth to become involved in the program as mentors and junior staff.

Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa (CAYFO)

CAYFO is a youth-operated program that receives mentorship and financial support from Ottawa City Council. Its purpose is to promote youth leadership and civic participation. Through its sub-groups – the Ottawa Youth Commission, For Youth By Youth (FYBY) News, and an annual youth awards gala organized by its Youth Planning Committee – CAYFO has become a vehicle for articulating youth voices, celebrating youth civic achievements, and advocating for the needs and rights of young people.

Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC)

OCH is the largest social housing provider in Ottawa, and the second largest in Ontario. As part of its mandate to engage the participation of tenants in managing social housing neighbourhoods, each summer OCHC hires 40 – 50 young people living in social housing communities to assist in maintenance projects and grounds-keeping. In conjunction with the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, the Corporation also sponsors a scholarship program (Youth Futures) which assists academically proficient secondary school graduates residing in social housing communities with their first year university expenses.

5.5 Key Elements Of The Discourse

Although ranging in size and scope of activity, the vast number of organizations and associations that provide services for youth in Ottawa have adopted or acknowledged the necessity of strengthening supportive social relationships for young people. Culled from analysis of the

websites and published documents the aforementioned organizations, and from the interviews that were conducted with eleven youth service providers from a number of organizations, we discerned nine key themes that constitute the discourse of youth support in the Ottawa region. We present a summary of the main thrust of each theme, along with excerpted interviews statements.

5.5.1 Perspectives on Risks Confronting Children/Youth

The experience of growing up in low-income circumstances tends to put young people “at risk” in myriad different ways. They are more likely to have experienced family instability, conflict and abuse, and more prone to anxiety and lack of self-confidence. As a result they may struggle with learning difficulties, suffer from behavioural and/or emotional disorders, and demonstrate weak social skills. Without adequate support, such difficulties tend to increase the propensity of adolescents to withdraw from school and be distrustful of authority and averse to any form of civic engagement. Likewise, in neighbourhoods that are unsafe, young people tend to be more vulnerable to exploitation and violence, and more easily drawn into drug use, prostitution, criminal activity, and wayward street life. Invariably most youth who live with such risks are without the means or ability to articulate their fundamental needs. They are often the victims of inequalities in the workplace, in legal systems and in school systems.

Community House

Back in 2003 there was criminal activity [in the neighbourhood]. . . . Youth were getting easy money selling drugs. The media [were] causing fear [and] some kids glorified this, [getting] involved in a gang. . . . [It was} frightening . . . Most kids don’t want to be drug dealers, they’re not proud of it, but if there are no opportunities So there was a lot of pressure on the community house to combat this.

Youth Services Bureau

The problem is not the youth. The problem lies with the [lack of] resources in the homes and lack of support. . . [Many] parents are leaving their kids at 18 months and putting them in a day care and pick them up at 6:00 [p.m.] and by then they [parents] are already tired. It relates to poverty. . . they need to go to work, it is all about money. The challenges confronting the youth [and their families] are always poverty, discrimination, lack of employment, and mental health issues Some of the youth are lucky and have supports, but others don’t and they end up being recruited by gangs.

Boys & Girls Club

[There is risk] when the kids are isolated, and where there is not a lot of activity for them.

5.5.2 Shared Philosophy and Goals

In light of these risks that face young people living in low-income situations, there is a consensus among youth service organizations that programs for youth should be guided as far as possible by the fundamental aim of providing safe, supportive places where children and youth can experience positive relationships, have access to opportunities, and develop confidence and skills for life. There is likewise a common accord among social service agencies concerning the necessity of communication, and eventually partnership connections, with families and communities.

It is generally understood that schools must establish safe learning environments and develop the necessary supports and resources that will facilitate student learning and achievement. There is likewise common acknowledgment that youth oriented programs should be sensitive to the diverse perspectives and personal experiences of young people, and to the social factors related to gender, culture, and family background that influence these perspectives and experiences. High-risk youth should have access to trained, empathic counsellors who are capable of listening to them, offering them safety and support, and guiding them through whatever threatens their physical, sexual and mental well-being.

In acknowledging young people's propensity to exercise agency and choice, organizations should cultivate youth participation in policy deliberations and the planning and delivery of services. Through such participation, youth should be able to freely express their opinions and be assured of recognition and respect as values individuals. Participation should also serve as a basis for fostering self-esteem, hope, goal-orientation, and commitment to community that will last into adulthood. Organizations should reinforce and reward youth creativity and achievement. Additionally, in consideration of the goals of youth participation and empowerment, and the principle of working *with* young people, partnership with the "target population" – youth themselves – is a common operating precept among youth service agencies. Concurrently, because responsibility and accountability are empowering and therefore essential elements of individual growth, it is important to encourage youth to accept responsibility and be accountable for the choices they make.

Community House

We need our kids [to be] doing something. We need to give them opportunities for employment and to get connected with other people. . . . We need role models for our youth [to facilitate] a sense of self-worth, and to be accepted. We are trying to provide support for them as best we can . . . to provide opportunities to help them with school so it's not so difficult . . . a support system where they can come and work in groups to get to understand what they are working on [at school].

High School

We work with students in a proactive way . . . not just reacting to situations, [but] helping them to understand that there is more to do than get in trouble,. . . [instead to] build relationships, [and] create a culture of listening and respecting peers, . . . [We try to] help them outside the school and connect with parents. [We] have students involved in a number of co-op opportunities where connections are made.

Pathways

We have four main supports : academic; social; financial; [and] learning communication skills. . . [We] provide them with an opportunity to try new things . . . like part time jobs and co-op placements . . . and to identify what their goals are . . . and provide them the steps they need to achieve those goals and to build a sense of community.

Boys & Girls Club

Our mission is to provide a safe and supportive environment where children and youth can overcome barriers, . . . through role-modeling, mentorship or social skills development. . . . [Our] commitment [is] to education . . . and to employment opportunities either at the Boys & Girls Club or out into the broader community.

Youth Services Bureau

[Our aim is to provide youth] an opportunity to meet with an adult they can trust in a safe environment . . . to get the youth engaged in their community [*sic*] and to give back to the community and take actions. . . . If you trust youth, they are capable of producing and really working hard.

5.5.3 Institutional Partnerships

In part because of the challenges of financial constraints and discrete program limitations, institutional partnerships are now routinely espoused as a basic operational condition for reducing poverty and addressing the needs of low-income children and youth. While the notion of partnership is subject to variable definitions and differentiated relationships, in the context of social assistance in Ottawa it connotes an array of routine collaborative activities such as grant proposal submissions, allocations of space for activities organized by partner organizations, shared costs, and co-administered activities. In addition, it relates to personal relationships among the personnel of different organizations and the common values, experiences, and perspectives that facilitate collaborative work.

To a large extent, partnerships among youth service agencies and personnel can be regarded as utilitarian, with the main purpose being to pool resources and implement joint activities for maximum efficacy and impact. In this sense, partnerships have been the fruit of necessity. Yet there is also a moral and ideological rationale for partnership and collaboration. Youth service organizations have all generally acknowledged the social ecology of youth socialization and development, and have thus embraced a common discourse of holistic support for low-income youth that requires sharing ideas and resources, and capitalizing on mutual strengths and comparative advantages.

5.5.4 Collaboration with Families/Tenants/Parents

Apart from focusing on the specific needs and interests of young people, youth service organizations regard community development as an essential facet of child and youth support. To that end, community development discourse incorporates the precepts of reinforcing inherent community assets and encouraging tenant ownership of externally supported community programs. Underscoring the notion of community ownership is the idea that community inhabitants should “have a voice”, that their opinions matter, and that tenant partnership is essential for effective social assistance. In addition, however, beyond the domain of inter-organizational collaboration, the ethos of partnership also extends to the engagement of community inhabitants, including young people themselves. While children and adolescents are the designated beneficiaries of youth service activities, agency representatives frequently refer to parents and community leaders interchangeably as clients and partners. This was evident in Britannia Woods where a core group of parents regularly attend community house meetings for purposes of program planning and the subsequent recruitment and coordination of tenant participation in community house activities.

Community and parental partnerships, however, are connections that cannot be taken for granted or easily achieved. As was evident in Britannia Woods, and as several youth service providers confirmed, relationships with residents in social housing neighbourhoods often need to be cultivated and constantly reinforced. There is, of course, a legal aspect to parental and community involvement in the provision of social services for children and youth. Signed parental consent is a requirement if children are to participate in out-of-school educational and recreational activities. Yet while formal consent is an affirmation of trust and the *in locus parentis* of an organization and its staff, it is by no means an indication of active parental engagement or even interest in services provided for young people.

In Britannia Woods and other communities, youth service agencies must constantly conduct community outreach. As respondents indicated, this necessitates the willingness of agency staff and volunteers to actively connect with parents and families, and to empathize with them, to seek their advice, to listen to them, to draw upon their skills, and to work with them in establishing structures and procedures that are appropriate for the community and will allow for the development and entrenchment of genuine partner relations. It requires the development of trust and an acceptance of a shared interest in the development and socialization of young people.

Community House

Volunteers play a main part in everything. . . . with every event, like barbecues, open houses, and other kinds of special events. They are mainly from the community [and] they play a critical role.

Boys & Girls Club

We have members of the community being mentors or assistant coaches.

Church

Women are more interactive and community-oriented and social than men. . . . If you want something done, go to the women. . . . From day one on our board of directors, I have dealt with primarily women.

High School

Partnership with parents is crucial.

Pathways

We started doing orientations for our parents and we invited the schools as well. . . . [We try] to act as a bridge between the parents and the schools. . . It's an important relationship between the SPSW and the school staff.

Our relationship with the parents and families is important . . . [Parents] allow us to speak with the school about how [their children] are doing and allow the school to speak with us and share marks and [incidents of] absenteeism.

Boys and Girls Club

In whatever community that is looking for our service, we try to find a way to work with different community partners.

5.5.5 Mentorship

All organizations recognize that adults and older peers are instrumental in forging relationships of support for young people. In circumstances of low-income and single parenthood, youth can benefit significantly from the development of friendships with organizational staff and volunteers. Mentoring is a common feature of youth service organizations. While oriented towards facilitating trust and goal-orientation among youth, these are relationships that incorporate aspects of guidance, role modeling, counseling, and teaching.

5.5.6 Youth Participation / Involvement

The discourse of partnerships extends to young people themselves, particularly among older adolescents who have acquired familiarity with social service agencies as program beneficiaries. Routinely youth are recruited as volunteers, as contracted junior staff, and as members of planning and decision-making committees. Underlying such engagement is an acknowledgment that youth-oriented programs can benefit considerably by drawing upon the abilities,

experiences, and perspectives of selected cohorts of young people. In addition, there is a common understanding of the merits of experiential learning, that the assumption of responsibility within an established institutional structure is an invaluable source of learning and the basis for the expansion of self confidence and further social development. This reflects a strength-based ethos that encourages the agency of children and youth, and the imperative of facilitating the development of their capabilities in responsible ways.

Community House

[There are] incentive programs in homework clubs and mentorship with point systems . . . [and so] older youth are giving back to their community.

Boys & Girls Club

We have peer-mentoring, role-modeling and a give-back kind of component to our program. Now [we encourage] the older youth to set an example for the younger members.

Church

Youth will follow other youth . . . kids bring kids.

Youth Services Bureau

By doing this work [participating in research and local needs assessment], a lot of youth realize that education is very important.

5.5.7 Funding / Resources

For all youth services in the city, regardless of size and mandate, financial constraints are perennial difficulties that frequently result in program discontinuities and deficiencies. Most – not all – youth service organizations must rely on provincial and municipal grants. Yet government support is rarely guaranteed beyond a two- to three-year period. This has been especially the case in the last two years in the wake of the downward turn in Ontario’s economic fortunes and the federal government’s fiscal belt tightening.¹⁴ The search for funds has become an ever-more demanding and time-consuming enterprise for youth service agencies. Fund-raising activities are numerous and constant, ranging from neighbourhood barbecue ticket sales and silent auctions to grant-proposal writing and appeals for tax deductible donations from the public – notably individual donors and corporate sponsors. Such ongoing fund-raising is

¹⁴ A recent survey of more than 400 Ontario agencies found that 60% had experienced increases in service demand since September 2008. Three-quarters of these agencies attributed the increase in demand, at least in part, to the recession. Half of the organizations surveyed also experienced a cut in at least one funding source during 2009, and 65% anticipated they would have further funding cuts in 2010.

essential not only for new initiatives, but for day-to-day operational budgets and the retention of qualified staff.

Community House

When [project] funding has ended [it] is hard to handle sometimes.

The city [government] will only fund one fulltime person [the community house director] at 40 hours a week, and that's the only guaranteed funding. We lease the building from Ottawa Housing, and we are responsible for all the up-keep and maintenance and staff funding. [So] we're working with very little.

Youth Services Bureau

Resources are always needed . . . [sometimes] you have to reduce the number of staff because of [limited or reduced] funding . . . and then [it is] challenging to re-staff and re-train...

Boys & Girls Club

We fundraise all of the time. . . We are very cautious of a large amount of one-year money [because] if that funding is removed, that is not fair to the children and youth. When we are looking at program funding, we are looking at sustainability.

Funding is always an issue, and we are projecting a deficit year in our next budget. . . . You can only expand so much, because you only have so many resources, but we are fortunate to have great staff and great community people who are behind us.

Pathways

We are good at writing grants . . . You have to become self-sustainable . . . [the funding] has to be long term. . . . The private sector continues to be an important funder and the Federal government just made a large commitment of funds and the province of Ontario has continued to provide funds. . . .

The church gives us [funds] to buy healthy snacks and these little extra things.

High School

The Urban Priority grant is awarded from the Ministry of Education to four schools in Ottawa, and the schools have discretion to spend the funds as they see fit. . . .[It] has given the opportunity for all students to participate, whereas before they could not participate if they did not have the money.

The schools that don't have money, they continue to be the have-not's because it is hard to generate money internally.. . .

Ironically, however, the continuous search for funding and corresponding efforts to ensure the efficacy of dollars spent on program activities have helped to solidify the field of youth social services and to heighten public awareness of the work that is being done for and with young people throughout the city. A common refrain among all organizations, governmental and nongovernmental, is: “We cannot do it alone.” This has extended into fund-raising as well. The pursuit of relatively limited funds for discrete program activities has compelled many youth service agencies to coordinate their fund-raising initiatives with organizational counterparts. Joint grant submissions are commonplace, with proposals often focusing on coordinated activities, shared infrastructure and the complementarity of institutional roles and responsibilities. Similarly, agencies have had to engage in what one interviewee referred to as “creative accounting”, a euphemism for stretching available resources as effectively as possible, and for relying on a single grant to fund diverse program activities administered by different organizations.

Community House

We are resource short, and don’t have the continuity that the children deserve. [However], we have ended up being very creative in pooling resources, . . . networking with all the various partners. . . . It’s multi-tasking. . . . Some days it is exhausting . . . we are competing [for funds] against bigger organizations and I worry. . .

5.5.8 Limitations / Constraints

While Ottawa is generally an affluent city, the poverty that is characteristic of families living in social housing neighbourhoods is a major constraint to the wellbeing of children and youth living in these neighbourhoods. Related to the issues of funding and resources, and the ever-present anxiety about shortfalls in funding and the need to continually appeal for adequate financial input, is the omnipresence of risks confronting youth, particularly those living in low-income neighbourhoods. A constant refrain in the discourse of youth assistance in Ottawa, therefore, is that there is always more that can be done.

5.5.9 Progress / Change

Underlying the discourse of youth assistance in the Ottawa region is a common view that, despite resource limitations and the challenges that remain to be overcome, the network of support for youth in most neighbourhoods and across the city is relatively strong. A key impetus underlying

Community House

It can take a while to get recognized and respected. Our infrastructures are fragile.

Overall the city should do better in meeting youth mental health issues. . . For pre-teen years there is a gap for these services.

There is a gap between us and the schools. . . . You may have one [school] principal you can connect with, but not the whole board.

Boys & Girls Club

Where it has to improve, is in terms of resources, and prioritizing a seamless transition from school to after-school-hour programs.

Transportation is one of the biggest obstacles in after school programming . . . Parental engagement is [also] a challenge for all of us. . . . to fully work with the children and youth, you have to have involvement from the parents.

One of our weaknesses over the years has been marketing, in terms of getting the message out about some of the different programs that we have here.

High School

There are always more [youth] that need our help, but they are not brought to our awareness.

Pathways

One challenge is that the program grows so rapidly, so there is a lot of complexity that comes with that amount of growth in that small amount of time.

Youth Services Bureau

I wish there were programs that were funded for 5 years or 6 years, . . because [it takes] two years to get confidence and trust of the community, to be sure youth are getting ready to understand or get the appropriate skills needed, . . . [but] when funding ends then the project is gone.

the discourse of youth support is that over the years there has been substantial progress not only in the establishment of a network of supportive relationships for young people in communities, but also in the development of a broad-based civic consciousness concerning the welfare of all children and youth. This consciousness has been a key factor in ensuring ongoing support from different branches of government, and from much of civil society as a whole. While all organizations attest to the fact that much more can and should be done to assist youth living in low-income circumstances, and in addressing the structural underpinnings of neighbourhood poverty, there is nonetheless a conviction that progressive change has been achieved. This is a factor that has ensured that the discourse of youth support is a vibrant force that has facilitated youth social capital formation in neighbourhoods such as Britannia Woods.

Community House

We are responding to the whole picture again. That creates partnerships, and staff get opportunities to work for the city so it's a layered approach for everything. . . . We have continuity. Youth are involved... and they are moving through school. It's very positive, I'm very happy about that.

High School

When [schools] get the money, you can see what they can do with it and the vision of what could be if [there was] the money to put into many students [being] able to participate in activities, where four or five years ago they would not be able to do so.

5.6 Conclusion

Youth social capital formation at the neighbourhood level occurs as a process that is inherent within relationships that range from family ties to formal and informal networks of support that are manifested within communities, between communities, and across a host of institutions, associations, various levels of government, and the citizenry at large. While the principal focus of this study has been on youth social capital formation within one particular neighbourhood, Britannia Woods, throughout the study we have been cognizant of the strength of what can be characterized as a city-wide field of youth assistance and support. Britannia Woods Community House is very much part of this field, as are many of the other organizations to which Britannia Woods children and youth are affiliated. As we have shown in this chapter, notably in drawing from Bourdieu's seminal work on social capital, the formation of youth social capital occurs in the context of a social ecology of relationships, and much of its impetus derives from a field of youth assistance and support. In Ottawa, the strength of this field, as we have demonstrated, is exemplified by a powerful common discourse that is associated with action and advocacy on behalf of, and with, young people.

VI. YOUTH SOCIAL CAPITAL IN BRITANNIA WOODS AND THE URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Within the last two decades the notion of social capital formation has generated growing interest as a basis of policy for preventing or reducing incidents of youth crime and violence and simultaneously enhancing opportunities for youth. This has been due to a combination of factors – criticism of the ineffectiveness and injustice of crime control measures designed to contain and punish marginalized youth, heightened awareness of the universality of youth rights and the responsibility of governments to protect and expand these rights, and widespread acknowledgment of the detrimental effects of poverty and socio-economic inequality on child rights and the socialization of young people. In addition, interest in social capital formation has stemmed from recognition of the extraordinary resilience that some at-risk children and youth possess that enables them to cope with and even surmount obstacles, risks, and traumas that they confront. Yet as studies of resilience have demonstrated, while to some extent the capacity for young people to overcome difficulties relates to their own unique psychological, emotional, and cognitive make-up, with few exceptions these characteristics are shaped by significant relationships that they experience with others. Such relationships generate the resources – the social capital – upon which young people can rely so as to overcome challenges and avoid or mitigate the effects of risk.

Yet opportunities for the development of relationships that can generate social capital are themselves a function of broader socio-economic circumstances. In environments of privation, the relationships that young people cultivate may engender risks and be more harmful than beneficial, and the capacity of loved ones and those individuals and groups that are desirous to assist young people may be insufficient to overcome the effects of prevailing social, economic, and ideological constraints. This has, therefore, led to the appropriation of social capital as a guiding concept for youth policies and programs. The underlying assumption is that through the expansion of opportunities for education, recreation, and safe spaces for self-discovery and social interaction, programs for youth can simultaneously generate supportive relationships that will enhance the socialization of young people and enable them to surmount the potential risks and drawbacks of social and economic disadvantage.

This is an assumption, however, that is not without its critics. In particular, the notion of social capital formation as a policy precept has drawn criticisms of what some regard as a blithe endorsement of an ill-defined concept that may be too easily regarded as a panacea for youth problems and may too readily discount the entrenched structural constraints of poverty and socio-economic inequality. Invariably, this is a challenge for research. Accordingly, the emergence of youth social capital as a precept of youth policies and programs, and the ensuing critiques and reservations that this has generated, led us to undertake this study of youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods, a low-income neighbourhood in the city of Ottawa.

We were guided by three questions: a) what are the key indicators of youth social capital formation in circumstances that pose potential risks for healthy youth development? b) what sorts of interventions facilitate youth social capital formation in low-income communities? and c) what conditions are necessary to ensure or improve the long term effectiveness of such interventions? In designing the study, we regarded social capital as the set of resources that

accrue from young people's relationships. These we distinguished as *structural resources*, i.e., the entities (individual and groups) to which youth are connected, and *functional resources*, i.e., the nature and quality of the benefits that accrue from relationships. Because of the quantitative and qualitative properties of social capital, we furthermore undertook to assess youth relationships and the ensuing resources both quantitatively, through an orally conducted "youth social capital survey", and qualitatively, by means of several focus group discussions with Britannia Woods youth. In addition, in acknowledgment of the social ecology of social capital, i.e., the network of youth relationships that extend beyond the proximity of their immediate family and neighbourhood contexts, we undertook a review of the mandates of various Ottawa city youth social assistance agencies as well as a series of interviews with several youth service personnel in order to gain insights into the ecological dimensions of youth social capital formation in one discrete urban neighbourhood. The partnership between the University of Ottawa researchers and the staff of Britannia Woods Community House (BWCH) in conducting the research, and the involvement of four neighbourhood youth as research assistants, greatly enhanced both fieldwork and analysis.

Findings from the survey, reinforced by the focus group interviews as well as through the extensive knowledge that BWCH staff have of the neighbourhood, confirmed that the majority of youth living in Britannia Woods have had to deal with challenges that most mainstream Canadian young people do not confront. Close to 75% of the youth interviewed in the survey were first generation immigrants, and English or French is a second language for most of them. Most of them had experienced transitions from one residence to another before their families were able to obtain social housing in Britannia Woods. More than half the youth surveyed lived with single mothers, and a smaller number lived with single fathers or other relatives. Many parents or household heads were either jobless or were engaged in low paid shift work. Although Britannia Woods is stigmatized by its reputation as focal point of crime and violence, a clear majority of youth indicated that they were quite content to live in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, many of them were sensitive to being typecast as "ghetto" inhabitants by non-residents and peers from other neighbourhoods.

Personal relationships were rated highly among the youth, with the greatest appreciation expressed for the support provided by mothers and by close friends. High ratings were also accorded to BWCH staff, teachers, and other adults and mentors whose purposeful relationships with youth are generally conducted so as to accommodate and support them. Apart from personal relationships, all youth in Britannia Woods have access to generally excellent schooling, and most have participated in various learning and recreational activities made available by BWCH in their own neighbourhood. Many have also had easy access to a number of community recreation centres outside of Britannia Woods, and some have participated in organized sports leagues and as members of musical and artistic groups. A number of youth have also had part-time work opportunities, particularly during the summer months, and many frequent places of worship as venues for socializing and reflection. In effect, through an array of personal and institutional connections, youth in Britannia Woods have had access to a host of structural resources both within as well as outside their immediate neighbourhood context.

Findings from the survey and focus groups also revealed that youth have benefited substantially from the social resources acquired through these connections. The survey results show

consistently high levels of school attendance and, despite some youthful complaints about particular teachers, correspondingly high levels of appreciation for school. Given the explicit mandate of schooling – the provision of formal education and socialization for long term productive citizenship – the educational success of almost all youth in Britannia Woods has been both a source and a result of social capital. Similar results and conclusions stem from the evidence of participation in, and appreciation for, other institutional connections, all of which are oriented towards engaging youth in learning, recreational, and social activities that foster skills development and goal-setting in safe social environments. In a neighbourhood whose reputation has been tarnished as a site of drug trafficking and periodical violence, the fact that the great majority of young people have not been drawn towards youth gangs or into the cycle of illicit drug dealing and violence is testament itself a positive outcome of the acquired social capital that facilitates access to other more benign benefits.

When asked in the survey to identify specific difficulties that they faced, the majority of youth either stated that they had no serious problems or they pointed to difficulties in school, largely to be interpreted as the academic and social challenges that most students face in schools. This was confirmed when the great majority of youth respondents identified school academic achievement alongside the acquisition of jobs and money as their short term goals. For all of them, there is one primary long term goal – attainment of satisfying steady employment. In their current context, they are all fully apprised of the necessity of education and skills development to achieve such a goal. From the perspective of BWCH staff and our own extensive familiarity with many youth in the neighbourhood, it was clear that the great majority of these young people were confident that through a combination of ongoing support and personal effort they would achieve these goals.

It was also clear, however, that while youth in Britannia Woods are for the most part availed of ample social capital that stems from multiple relationships and opportunities, a full understanding of the availability and strength of social capital formation for young people whose juxtaposition of social background and neighbourhood context is fraught with potential risk required a deeper understanding of the ecology of social capital formation. Through analysis of the interviews conducted with youth service providers and the mandates of various youth service organizations, coupled with a review of the key policy thrusts underlying Ottawa's Poverty Reduction Strategy, it became evident that youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods is very much a function of what Pierre Bourdieu captured in his conceptualization of *field*. In effect, throughout the city of Ottawa there exists what can broadly be defined as a field of child and youth support that engages hundreds of organizations and community groups, and extends into City Hall and Queens Park (the seat of the provincial government in Toronto). It is a field that connects professionals, volunteers, and myriad private and corporate donors, all united by a discourse – the interconnection of ideas and action – that adheres to the goal of investing time and resources for the wellbeing of marginalized and low-income youth. This is a goal that is reinforced by the formally espoused priorities of the city's Poverty Reduction Strategy, notably an emphasis on "building a community of inclusion and belonging". As we discerned in our analysis, the discourse of child and youth support incorporates nine principal themes that are commonly articulated in institutional mandates and by people who work in and contribute to this field. As outlined in Part V, these are (abridged):

- concern about the risks confronting many young people;
- shared philosophy and goals that underscore assistance for youth;
- commitment to institutional partnerships;
- communication and collaboration with families;
- the value of mentorship;
- the value of youth participation;
- a preoccupation with ensuring adequate or more funding and resources;
- acknowledgment of limitations and constraints; and
- recognition of progress achieved and the need to build on it.

These discursive themes are not the lexicon of formal policy pronouncements. Rather, as we have learned through extensive observations and many informal conversations with people who work in education, in youth social services, and in community development programs, these themes constitute the core agenda of the field of child and youth support. In effect, this to a large extent, is the ecology of youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods – a network of people and institutions who strive to promote their mutual agenda, and to sustain and expand this agenda through the acquisition of additional forms of capital – financial, informational, ideological, and political. It is a challenging endeavour that requires coordination of multiple activities and services, outreach among local communities, ongoing advocacy and media savvy, a constant quest for resources, and vigilance of the multiple sources of risk that prey on adolescent vulnerability.

A strong argument can, of course, be made that the strength of the field of child and youth support in Ottawa is itself a function of an affluent socio-economic environment. As we have indicated, Ottawa is a unique city in many respects, fortuitous in having the combination of a strong local economy (albeit with pockets of poverty), generally high levels of education and civic awareness among its population, with plenty of opportunities for further education for adolescents and adults alike, popular media that are reasonably informative and balanced in their coverage of local issues and events, and vigorous connections between civil society and municipal and provincial levels of government. The political, economic, and social dynamics of the city clearly help to sustain the field of child and youth support, and by extension youth social capital formation in Britannia Woods. Yet conversely, the field of youth support is an offshoot of a strong collective sense of the interconnectedness of individual, community, and regional wellbeing that permeates the urban political economy. As revealed in this study, youth social capital formation is part of this broader mutually reinforcing collective dynamic.

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APPENDIX 1: Youth Social Capital Formation Focus Groups Questions

Introduction to Participants:

This focus group discussion follows upon the earlier series of questionnaire/interviews that we conducted as part of a study on support for children & youth in Ritchie. We hope that our discussion with you in this focus group meeting will help us to further understand issues surrounding youth support and how support systems can be strengthened.

We would like to audio-record this discussion. However, everything you say will remain strictly confidential. Audio tapes will be transcribed, but all the taped information will be kept locked up by the research team. We will not use your name or that of any other participant when we present the results of our study. And we also ask that you respect the confidentiality of what we discuss in the focus group.

The Neighbourhood

1. Can you tell us about Ritchie as a place to live? (opening question).
2. Can you tell us about Ritchie as a place for you to grow up in?
 - a) What are the good things about the community for you?
 - b) What aspects of the community that you find are challenging or difficult?
 - c) Is this neighbourhood a good place for family life? . . .
 - d) Is Ritchie a neighbourhood where you and your friends are able to participate in decisions? . . where you can promote changes or get things done?

Britannia Woods Community House

3. Can you talk to us about Britannia Woods Community House?
 - a) What is your understanding of the role of the Community House in Ritchie?
 - b) Do you come to the Community House often?
 if so, why?
 if not, why?
 - c) Are there ways in which you think the Community House could be improved ?
 for the community as a whole?

... for small children?

... for teens?

... other than BWCH in Ritchie

4. Apart from the Community House, is there any other type of organized activity available for you in Ritchie? (explain).

Prompts: ... recreational? ... educational? ... social?

Outside Ritchie

5. Outside Ritchie, what organizations and activities do you go to regularly or participate in?

a) ... organizations ... ?

b) ... activities ... ?

c) If you go or participate in any of these, how come? ... what's interesting about it?

d) If you don't participate in any organized activity outside the community, how come?

School & Teachers

6. Can you talk to us about school?

a) (*general opening*) Where do you go to school? ... What grades are you in ... ?
How do you go to school (walk? ... by bus? ...)

b) Do you like school? ... if so, why ... what is it that you like about school?

c) Do you have problems with school? ... if so, what? ... & why?

d) What are your teachers like? ... do you like them?.

... if so, why ?

... if not, why?

e) Does each of you have a favourite teacher?.

... what do you like about her/him?

Places of Worship

7. Do you go regularly to the mosque or to church?

a) If so, why do you go . . . ?

Possible probes: . . . social activities? . . . guidance (from whom . . . in what way) ? . . . belief in God (spiritual sustenance) ? . . .

Police

8. What do you think about the police?

a) Do you see them often in Ritchie ?

b) Are you okay with the police . . ? . . . explain.

c) Is there something about the police that bothers you? . . . explain

d) Is there a difference between the police & the community safety officers in Ritchie?

. . . Any other Adults/older people

9. Are there any other adults or people older than you that we haven't mentioned that are helpful to you or provide you with support?

a) Who ?

b) How do they help you or support you?

Summary questions

10. Do you believe that you have adequate support overall?

a) If yes, please explain

b) If not, please explain?

11. What do you think are ways to strengthen support for you and your friends in Ritchie?

Probes: . . . e.g., material? . . . educational? . . . recreational? . . . financial? . . . etc.

12. What do you think people outside the neighbourhood think of Ritchie? . . . Why?

Wrap-Up

13. What do you hope will come from this study in terms of:

- a) Ritchie as a place to live?
- b) For you in particular?

APPENDIX 2: Interview Questions for Youth Service Providers

Introduction to Participants:

The questions we will be asking you follow upon an earlier series of questionnaire/interviews that were conducted as part of a study on support for children & youth in Ritchie/Britannia Woods neighbourhood. We hope that by answering these questions, you will be able to contribute to our understanding of issues related to youth support and how institutional and non-institutional forms of support for young people can be strengthened.

We would like to audio-record this discussion. Everything you say will remain strictly confidential. Audio tapes will be transcribed, but all the taped information will be kept locked up by the research team. We will not use your name or any other means of identifying you when we present the results of our study.

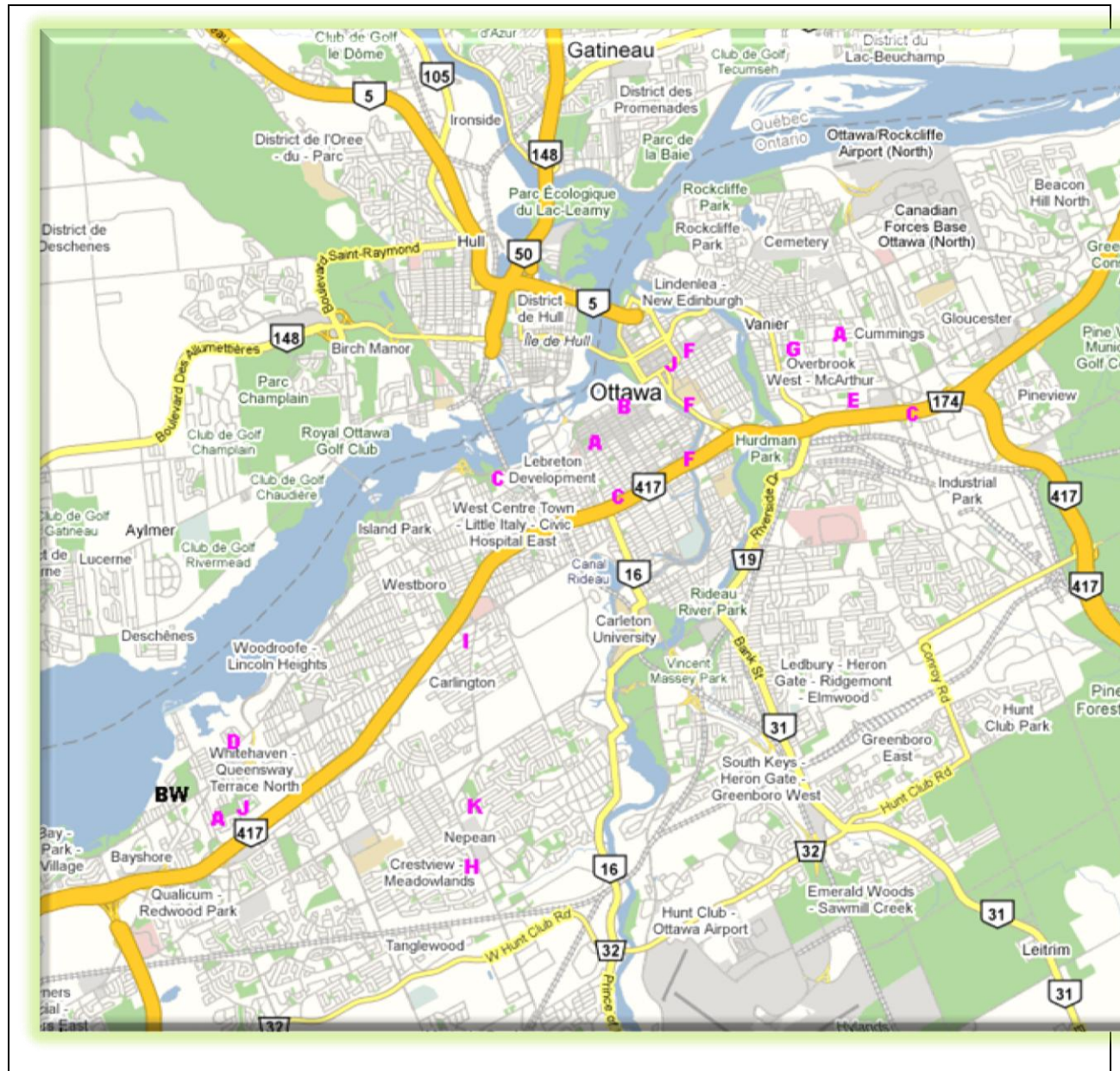
Questions for Community Organizations:

1. Can you tell us about the role and function of [your institution/organization/centre]
2. How long has _____ been in existence?
 - What are its activities & services?
 - Who are its clientele?
 - What is its staff composition
 - How is it structured?
 - What are its funding sources?
3. What are the services that you offer young people?
 - recreational?
 - educational?
 - social?
4. Can you describe the young people who come to _____?,
e.g., age
 - gender
 - size of the population
 - place of residence
 - ethnic/cultural background
 - language
 - approximate socio-economic status . . .
5. Roughly what proportion of the young people attending _____ are from Ritchie (Britannia Woods)?
6. On average, how often do youth from Ritchie attend? Is there differential attendance among

sub-groups on the basis of age, gender, etc.?

7. Why do these youth come here? . . . what attracts them . . . ?
8. What is the nature of their participation, ie. what activities or programmes are they involved in ?
9. Are there differences in the interests and activities among the youth, e.g., on the basis of age, gender, neighbourhood of residence, etc.?
10. Does your organization communicate or collaborate in any way with Britannia Woods Community House? If so, how?
11. With what other public & nongovernmental organizations, associations, & groups do you communicate or collaboration? . . . and in what way?
12. Are there any areas of difficulty or challenge that you face, particularly with regard to support for youth?
... e.g., staff?
 - funding?
 - activities?
 - material & infrastructure?
13. Do you think services for youth in Ritchie, and other similar neighbourhoods, could be improved? If so, how . . . ? If not, why not . . .
14. What is your overall view of support for children and adolescents in the Ottawa-Carleton catchment area? Positive aspects . . . ? Negative aspects . . . ? Areas that you feel require strengthening?
15. Are there any other points you would like to make regarding youth, and the support for young people, who are living in Britannia Woods?
16. Similarly, are there any additional observations you can make regarding networks of support for low-income youth in the Ottawa region?

APPENDIX 3: Preliminary Map of Selected Youth Services in Ottawa



<p>A – Boys & Girls Club – Youville, Rue Nepean, Dumaaurier Avenue, McArthur Avenue</p> <p>B – Community Foundation of Ottawa - Albert Street</p> <p>C – Ottawa Food Bank - Michael Street, Bayview Road, Catherine Street</p> <p>D – Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre - Richmond Road</p> <p>E – United Way Ottawa - Coventry Road</p> <p>F – Sandy Hill Community Health Centre - Somerset West, Main Street, Nelson Street</p>	<p>G – Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre - Donald Street</p> <p>H – Nepean, Rideau, and Osgoode Community Resource Centre - Merivale Road</p> <p>I – Carlington Community & Health Services - Merivale Road</p> <p>J – Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa - St Joseph, Besserer Street, Queensview Drive</p> <p>K – Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa - Merivale Road</p> <p>L - BW – Britannia Woods</p>
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